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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the Piedmont Schools Project, an experimental educational program that was conducted in School District of Greenville County, South Carolina. The study is presented in three parts. Part I describes the school district and the design of the project. Part II examines the nature and effects of the change strategy with specific reference to: (1) the learning communities which formed the new instructional environment; (2) staff development; (3) decision making within the school community; and (4) community and parental involvement and satisfaction. A general discussion of such issues as test scores, the transference program, and funding concludes this section. Part III presents insights from practitioner experience and reflections from an external perspective on educational innovation and innovators. This discussion also covers the nature of innovation as a melding of component pieces of systematic change and the social meaning of building community. The section ends with suggestions for further ways of learning from the Piedmont experience. (Author/APM)

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# LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

## Implementing Systemic Change in Schools

A Study of the Piedmont Schools Project, 1972-1977

Prepared by:
MAUREEN MacDONALD WEBSTER

July 1980

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the contributions of many people to this report. First, the members of the External Evaluation Team who worked long and hard to collect and analyze data for components of our study of the Implementation of the New Instructional Environment, during the final two years of the Piedmont Schools Project. THOMAS B. WILLIAMS and JOSEPH MERCURIO, in addition to their general responsibilities in management of on-site data collection, directed major sub-components of the Study. Tom Williams directed the decision-making component and Joe Mercurio the studies of community and parental involvement and satisfaction. DON NASCA, of the State University of New York at Brockport, directed the studies of learning communities and staff development activities. NANCY OSGOOD furnished valuable assistance to the principal investigator/author in general management and in assembling special data on the High School. IAN MERRETT helped with survey design and the programming of data.

Such are the vagaries of contract research that reorganization of the contracting corporation (Syracuse Research Corporation) brought the demise of the acclaimed Educational Policy Research Center at Syracuse and disbanded the team of researchers before the reporting phase was completed. The analysis and notes prepared before this occurred formed the prime basis for the present review of PSP experience. While the work of former colleagues is gratefully acknowledged, responsibility for the use made of it in this integrative study and for many of the judgments offered, belongs solely to the author.

Special thanks to MIRIAM CLASBY of Boston University and the Institute for Responsive Education. Miriam was not a member of the evaluation team; but over the period when this document was written she showed a remarkable understanding of the PSP experience in innovation and the related evaluation. Miriam wrote Chapter 7 (Beyond PSP), read and commented on other chapters, and was an unfailing source of support and insight throughout the writing period. Chapter 7 draws upon the work of two other members of the Evaluation Team. Jason Millman directed and completed a study of Cognitive and Affective Outcomes,

combining high calibre professional skills with perseverance to overcome problems in data acquisition and quality. BERNARD KAPLAN directed and completed the study of Transference which is also reviewed in Chapter 7 and he offered valued encouragement in the early period of getting this study under way when more than two years lapsed time had rendered "re-entry" difficult.

The long manuscript was transformed into a professional report both skillfully and cheerfully by BETTY KUTTRUFF.

Last but not least, it is a special pleasure to acknowledge the collaboration of the staff of the Piedmont Schools Project. They worked hard and enthusiastically to improve the quality of life and learning in the schools, meanwhile enduring the "goldfish bowl" status of a Federally funded and evaluated project. They often went out of their way to be helpful to our investigators and several of them contributed with frankness and insight to our understanding of what could be learned from their experience. PSP staff have told their own story in their Final Report. While they may well disagree with some of the judgments and interpretations found in this document, whatever they may find worthy in it is dedicated to them.

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For the staff of the Piedmont Schools Project
who sought and found "A Better Way in Education"

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# INTRODUCTION

In April 1975, The National Institute of Education issued a Request for Proposals for "The Evaluation and Analysis of Greenville County School District (South Carolina) Piedmont Schools Project". The 140-page, single-spaced document represented a deliberate strategy to refocus evaluative research efforts during the last 24 months of a 60-month project. Because the primary emphasis within the sponsoring unit (The Experimental Schools Program) was "a systemic strategy of change", and because the Piedmont Schools Project had undertaken comprehensive change affecting major components of school operation, the RFP required an evaluation strategy equally inclusive in its effort "to portray the experimental and assess its impact".

The specifications required that evaluation efforts should contribute to an explanatory perspective on two questions: What was the process of program implementation? and, What was the impact? The major focus of the evaluation (60% of total effort) was a "Study of the Process of Implementation of the New Instructional Environment" which included five components:

1. Community Input into the process of implementation.
2. Assignment of Programmatic Authority to the level of the group responsible for the implementation of decisions.
3. The Staff Development effort to promote the skills requisite to implement the new instructional environment.
4. The implementation of the Learning Community concept in the schools.
5. Parent and Community Satisfaction with their input into and involvement with the school program.

Four other sub-studies called for lesser percentages of total effort: An Assessment of Student Outcomes (12%), confined to analysis of data generated by standardized tests and surveys already in place; a study of The Process and Effects of Transference (10%), to examine the PSP program for systematic sharing of innovation with non-PSP schools; a study of The Process and Effects of Internal (Level I) Evaluation (8%); and a study of Program Allocations and Expenditures (5%). The remaining 5% of effort was to be allocated to Project

Reports--for the various sub-studies and for an analysis of the Project "as an interactive entity in its environment". The final documents were to cover the entire Project period from 1972-1977.*

The monumental task of assembling and analyzing such a range of data carried the task beyond the contracted budget and timeline (late 1977). At the same time, the vagaries of contract research--reorganization and refocusing of priorities away from education within the contracting research organization (Syracuse Research Corporation), and reorganizations and redeployment of staff within the funding organization (The National Institute of Education)--caused extended postponement of the work of final analysis and synthesis of data.

This 1980 report was commissioned by the Regional Programs group of NIE's Division of Dissemination and Improvement of Practice,** and was prepared by the former Director of External Evaluation for the Piedmont Schools Project (1975-77). The report summarizes and analyzes materials assembled to document and evaluate the various components of the major study on "The Process of Implementation of the New Instructional Environment". It is based upon review and reflection on documentation included in (a) formal reports by PSP and by external evaluators, submitted to NIE and already on file in the Institute,* and (b) accessible materials in various stages of analysis at the time when the NIE/SRC contract ended. While the prime focus is on implementing the changed instructional environment, the report ranges more widely than that. In keeping with NIE's desire to produce an evaluation of the "interrelated, integrated entity called the Piedmont Schools Project", the document includes a review of the Transference component and draws information from internal and external evaluation of student outcome data--without, however, attempting a full-scale treatment of evaluation processes and products.**

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*The original evaluation contract was awarded to Ultra-Systems, a California-based corporation. After two years, this contract was terminated by NIE, at which point the original evaluators had produced a report on Year 1 of PSP, an unaccepted set of designs for continuation work, and a vast array of unanalyzed material. In Year 3, there was no external evaluation team; NIE was devising its own redesign and, to maintain some continuity, assured minimal data collection (but no analysis). The second evaluation team (The Educational Policy Research Center, Syracuse Research Corporation) confronted a formidable task in seeking to recapture what happened in the first three years from a mass of unordered and incomplete materials, awesomely detailed in some areas, and silent in others; and, at the same time, assuring the ongoing documentation and evaluation of the last two years of PSP, according to unusually stringent NIE design lines. There was a lot of "learning from experience" in this situation, which it would be helpful to share--but not in this already laden report!

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A monograph which aims to review past practice in order to inform the present, as a way of planning for the future, has an emphasis different from that identified when the data were being collected. In this context, therefore, the perspective that guides the monograph is not that of conventional, detailed evaluation. Rather, it is a stand-back, so-what look at the PSP experience--an informed reflection upon that experience. The monograph, thus, draws selectively from available data, but transcends the limitations of the data to offer professional judgments about the meaning of PSP experience for future planning and action to improve educational practice.***

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*The most important of these are:

PSP, Proposal (1972)
PSP, Continuation Application (1975)
PSP, Final Report (1977)

SRC/EPRC, Implementing the New Instructional Environment in PSP Year 4 (Webster et al., 1976)
SRC/EPRC, Level I Evaluation Products (Millman, 1977)
SRC/EPRC, The Process and Effects of Transference (Kaplan, 1978)
SRC/EPRC, Cognitive and Affective Outcomes (Millman, 1978)
SRC/EPRC, Program Allocations and Expenditures (Williams, 1978)

**As with external evaluation (Contractor evaluation and Federal monitoring) processes so, too, there is much "learning from experience" possible by examination of PSP internal evaluation processes and effects, and the issues associated with assessing "student outcomes" and gauging the "success" of such a project.

***The findings and the judgments are carefully distinguished in italicized portions of the document.

This analysis of the process and effects of implementing a major systemic change can, as NIE intended, provide a "resource for improving the delivery of educational services" (RFP, p. 3). While it does, in and of itself, yield some generalizable findings for practitioners (and researchers), given the specific features of the Piedmont Schools Project, it may be useful, first, to examine some of the contextual variables of the Project and its sponsoring agency.

## The National Context of the Piedmont Schools Project

The Experimental Schools Program (ES) appeared on the Federal education landscape in 1971 as an anomaly--organizationally, conceptually, and historically. Originally intended for assignment to the proposed National Institution of Education, the program was lodged for two years in the Office of Education while Congress debated the merits and features of the new educational research operation. A deviant within the Office of Education, the status of ES did not change with its move to NIE in 1973 as an inherited program rather than as an initiative of the new research enterprise. Swift reorganizations within NIE continued the pattern of unstable organizational location and distance from mainstream research efforts.

Conceptually, ES differed from typical Federal research designs which generally emphasize either large-scale empirical studies or sharply focused analyses of discrete interventions. The goal of ES was to understand the process of comprehensive educational change within schools. A number of unique design features supported this bold purpose: the identification of seven sites willing to commit themselves to comprehensive change; a five-year funding cycle with start-up planning time; parent and community involvement in planning and implementation; in-depth documentation and evaluation of process and product variables and their interconnections. Implementation of the design afforded sites unprecedented degrees of freedom: freedom to choose goals and modalities for the comprehensive change; freedom (to a degree) from funding insecurities; freedom from State and district interference. All these features marked ES as maverick and thus alien to traditional practice at Federal, State, and local levels.

Historically, ES represented a synthesis of the late sixties. The press of the civil rights movements and the dreams of the Great Society launched the Office of Education into dozens of new programs for elementary and secondary schools--some supporting services to low-income, handicapped, and minority and non-English speaking students; some providing resources for desegregating schools; some encouraging innovations in curriculum and instruction. The welter of initiatives imaged the ferment in the larger society, spawning proposals for deschooling, for open schools, for middle schools, for community schools. Given the evident problems of piecemeal, short-term experiments, it seemed logical, at the turn of the decade, for Federally-funded researchers to face the task of clarifying goals of educational change, consolidating resources, and understanding change processes. The logic failed, however, in the face of unpredictable political, social, and economic shifts. The unsettled Nixonian presidency culminating in Watergate; the brakes on Vietnam and campus protests leading to new concerns for discipline and the "basics"; unmistakable signals of growing inflation and recession generating patterns of retrenchment--the scene totally changed during the brief years of the Experimental Schools Program. The values, the interests, the imagination which gave it life disappeared.

This recapitulation adds an important dimension to any review of ES projects. It suggests that, because of organizational, conceptual, and historical tensions, ES carried within it the seeds of its own destruction. Individual sites engaged in massive change efforts were not immune to the counter pressures from the Federal educational bureaucracy, from larger social currents, and from local constituents. Whatever was achieved and whatever was learned occurred despite these counter-forces. A great deal was achieved, and a great deal can be learned. The question is not whether we can learn from such experience, but whether we will choose to exert the time and effort to do so. A systematic approach to learning from experience in past Federally-funded projects and programs may be attractive in cost-benefit terms in a time of resource stringency, as a partial alternative to the historic patterns of off-with-the-old, on-with-the-new as a way of conducting national research and development.

## The Piedmont Schools Project: Substance

The School District of Greenville County (South Carolina) received some 6.5 million dollars of Federal support in the five-year period, 1972-1977, to implement systemic change in a set of eight K-12 public schools. The intent of the undertaking, called the Piedmont Schools Project, was to change radically and comprehensively the nature of the total instructional environment of the K-12 sub-system. The Project aimed to implement measures to change the opportunities, attitudes and behaviors of people (students, teachers, administrators) who live and work in the set of schools; to change their relationships with each other; and to change the relationships of the schools with professional educators, parents and other citizens of the broader community in which the schools are located. The strategy adopted to bring about change served the goal of "improving educational practice" (NIE)--or, as expressed in the PSP motto, "Seeking a Better Way in Education". Moreover, given the equity considerations underlying the desegregation context of the schools, the Project may be seen as seeking to further "equal opportunities for a quality education", although this was not an explicit goal.

As with other projects within the Experimental Schools' multi-million dollar program, the PSP had to meet criteria reflecting such concerns as minority participation, underachieving students, community and parental involvement, etc.--associated with issues of equal educational opportunity as they emerged in the 1960's. As with other ES projects, the PSP reflected a commitment to the idea that significant change in educational practice requires a comprehensive and sustained approach (as contrasted with the piecemeal and short-term characteristics of much prior sponsored innovation in schools). And, as with other ES projects, the PSP was the subject of Federally-funded documentation and analysis by an external team of researchers, whose work and experience--together with those of PSP personnel--constitute the data base from which judgments may be made and insights gained about the process of changing schools.

On the one hand ES/PSP was an ambitious project, breaking new ground in the duration, range and complexity of its innovative processes. On the other hand, the data documenting project experience, albeit intimidatingly voluminous, are constrained (a) by limitations in the state-of-the-art in analyzing complex processes and effects of innovation, and (b) by vacillation and ambiguities in views of evaluator roles, research purposes, questions, and methods to be emphasized, and the audiences that the documentation should serve. Although this situation has its frustrations and spawned criticism and detractors of ES, an examination of the overall experience can be instructive as we move to find new ways to draw from past experience and to improve educational practice.

## Outline of the Report

The Study is presented in three parts. Part I describes briefly the Context and Design for Change in the Piedmont schools (Ch. 1 and Ch. 2).

Part II examines The Nature and Effects of the Change Strategy, with specific reference to the implementation of "Learning Communities" (Ch. 3), which formed the heart of the new instructional environment and delivery system; "Staff Development" (Ch. 4); "Decision-making Within the School Community" (Ch. 5); and "Community and Parental Involvement and Satisfaction" (Ch. 6). Then follows a general discussion of considerations "Beyond PSP: Outcomes, Transference, Closing the Books" (Ch. 7).*

Part III, Learning from Experience (Ch. 8) seeks to bring together insights from practitioner experience and reflections from an external perspective, to discuss innovating (viewed as the process of introducing a complex set of changes to transform traditional practice), and innovators (particularly those assigned leadership positions at area and building level). This in turn leads to a discussion of understanding the innovation--both as a melding of component pieces of systemic change (focus on the comprehensive innovation), and in the social meaning of building community (focus on the innovators). The section ends with some brief suggestions for further ways of learning from PSP experience.

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*Chapter 7 was written by Dr. Miriam Clasby.

The report has turned out to be a more lengthy and time-consuming undertaking than either the writer or the sponsors intended. For ease in reading the text is divided by topic headings, and findings and judgments are highlighted in italics. It should be possible to read with understanding the individual chapters as discrete entities; but the whole sequence is cumulative in effect. For the report, as for the Project which gave it birth, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and the possibilities of improving practice and learning from experience increase as one makes the effort to understand the whole.

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# PART I

# CONTEXT, SETTING, AND DESIGN

# CHAPTER ONE

# CHANGING PIEDMONT SCHOOLS--THE CONTEXT AND SETTING

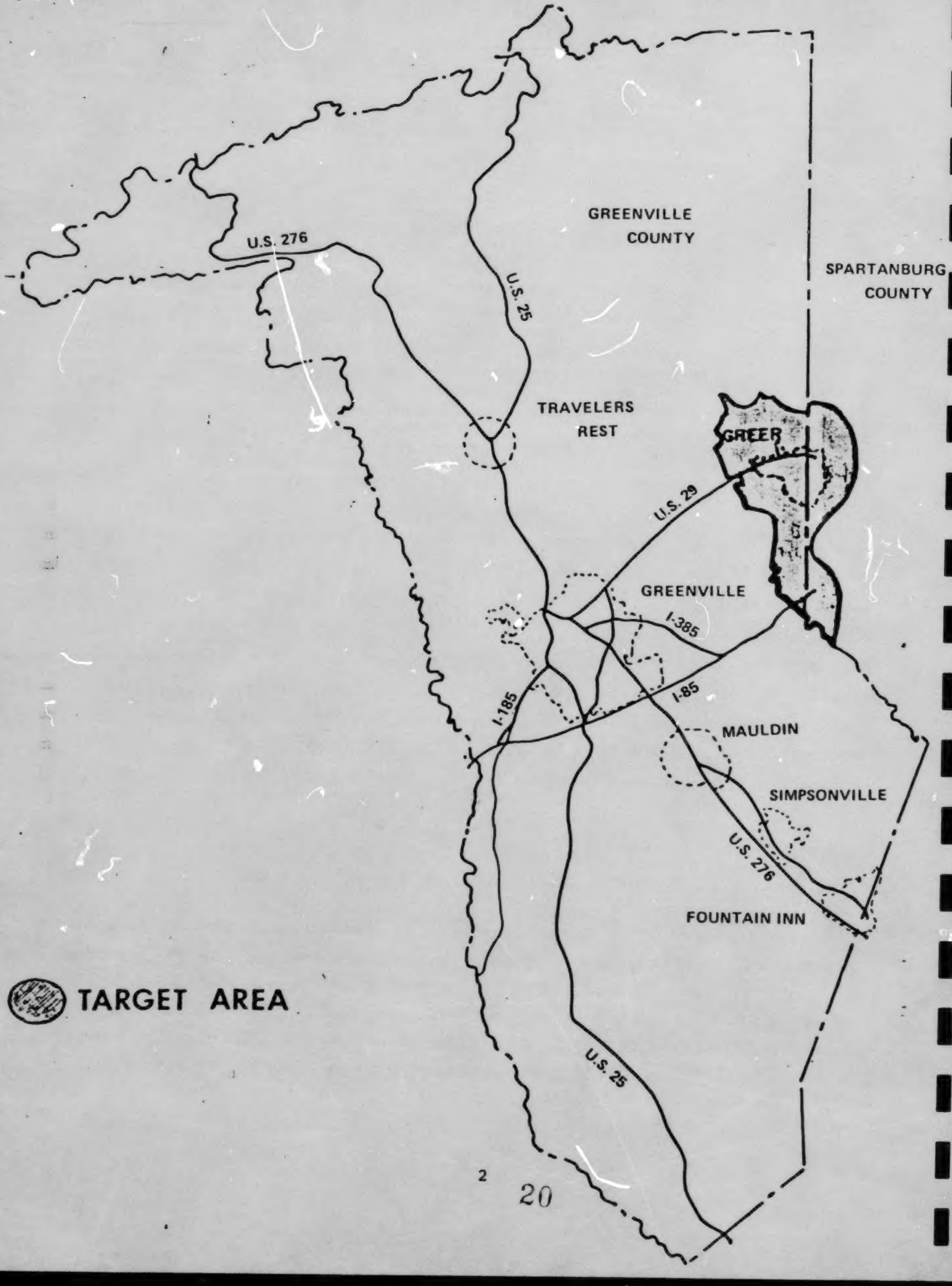
## A. INTRODUCTION

> *The Piedmont Schools Project [PSP] is an effort designed to bring about planned, systematic, and comprehensive change in the existing educational programs of the The School District of Greenville County. A segment of the school district, the Greer area, has been selected for the testing of this design--a design which will be constantly evaluated and components of which will be adapted and translated into educational programs in the rest of the school district. (GCSD, Project Plan, March 1972)*

This report focuses primarily upon the experience of a group of K-12 schools in the Greer area of Greenville County, South Carolina, between 1972 and 1977, when they were engaged in a major effort to change the total instructional environment. The eight schools in the Greer section of the County School District were allowed in some significant ways to divert from the mainstream of District public education during project years. Yet, the mainstream remained the District itself. From it the target area schools came and to it they returned with their tributaries of innovation. This chapter sketches some key features of the District as a context and of the target area as a setting for change in schooling.

## B. CONTEXT - GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The School District of Greenville County is the largest school district in South Carolina and one of the 100 largest in the United States. In 1971-72 when the project was being planned, there were around 57,000 students enrolled in K-12 schools and the elected nine member Board of Trustees employed over 5,000 people (including some 2,800 teachers). The Board prepares the education budget. The District is fiscally independent up to the millage set by law, with election required for tax increases. To administer this large system, it is


GREENVILLE
COUNTY
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REST
GREER
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GREENVILLE
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TARGET AREA

divided into areas--each one corresponding to a geographic section of the District, and headed by an Assistant Superintendent. Normally there are four such areas; for the five years of the Piedmont Schools Project, Project schools were designated as constituting a separate area, with the Project Director reporting directly to the Superintendent.

The School District covers 790 square miles in the heart of the Piedmont Plateau in the northwestern part of the State. The District is slightly larger than the County itself--an artifact of school district consolidation in 1951 when the former Greer School District No. 285 was absorbed into the Greenville system. This is significant for the project we will discuss because the target area encompassed the city of Greer and its environs and drew 36 percent of its students from neighboring Spartanburg County (see Figure #1). The economic, social and demographic features of this area and political issues related to the schooling system are important elements of the context for innovation.

Economy*. Greenville County is the central urban county of a major manufacturing region, although it is neither a major financial nor a major distribution center. In 1973, 39 percent of County earnings came from manufacturing which is heavily dominated by the textile mill products industry. Over half of the South Carolina textile machinery industry is located in the County, and if we count together the apparel industry, the chemical industry (which produces many man-made fibers used in textile mills) and the non-electrical machinery industry, an estimated 69 percent of employment in manufacturing is textile related. Within this framework, employment opportunities tend to be more "blue collar" than "white collar".

The hourly pay for factory labor in the County is about 75 percent of the rate prevailing in the nation for manufacturing employments and lower labor costs have been one factor in attracting industry to the area. While dominance of textile-related employment does mean vulnerability in times of national economic recession and periods of high unemployment may occur, these periods tend to be short-term. Moreover, the number of employment opportunities in the County is expected to rise much faster than the normal growth of the labor force (as calculated without significant in-migration). Projections for the decade are for continued economic growth and expansion of employment opportunities.

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*Primary data source is Lawrence Shaw (Economic Analysis), The Economy of Greenville County. Report prepared for Greenville County Planning Commission, May 1976.

Population migration*. According to the 1970 census, county population was over 240,000. From 1950 to 1975 job openings increased at three times the national rate, with no upward pressure on wages because of the large supply of workers (including significant additions of women and people shifting from agricultural employments). In the 1950s and 1960s there was net out-migration from the region "particularly as young people seeing inadequate employment opportunities at home, left the region after finishing their elementary and high schooling". From 1970 on, however, population of the Piedmont area has increased more rapidly than in the nation generally. In-migration has resulted in population increases of 12 percent in Greenville County (compared with ten percent in the Piedmont region, nine percent in South Carolina, and five percent in the United States) in 1970-1975, with most coming from the south.

Blacks were mostly out-migrants in the 1965-70 period and had probably balanced in- and out-migration in 1970-75. These figures have resulted in an estimated decline in the black population of Greenville County from 16.6 percent of the total in 1970 to 15.9 percent in 1975.

The largest increase in population in 1970-75 was in family formation ages: the population aged 20-34 increased twice as fast as the population as a whole. The increase in school age population was offset by an increase in enrollment in private schools in the County from 4,000 in 1970 to 6,000 in 1975, and by expansion of programs for kindergarten and for school dropouts. The net result is that membership in the School District remained almost stationary in 1970-75 and the District did not have to face problems of closing buildings or firing teachers. Declining enrollments were thus not a problem in the project period, nor are they projected to be in the immediate future, because substantial in-migration is expected in the 1980s.

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* Based on Shaw, op cit.

Issues in the School District

1. Consolidation. Prior to consolidation in 1951, Greer had an independent school system which was the third largest of the 82 districts in the Greenville County area. Countywide consolidation was mandated in 1951 by the state after a referendum to achieve it was defeated throughout the County. In Greer the vote was 92 percent against consolidation. Over 20 years later, while PSP was being implemented, there were still people in Greer who referred to consolidation as "when we lost our schools" and the District Superintendent perceived the issue as one of the most difficult to handle.

2. Tax levies and bonding. Per capita personal income in Greenville County is 15 percent above that in the State generally, but expenditures per pupil are about the same. SDGC's operating budget for 1975-76 (end of project) was about 3.6 percent of the County's personal income (compared with 4.7 percent in South Carolina and 4.5 percent in the United States). Per pupil expenditure was 71 percent of the national average.

County monies available for education are still subject to referendums whenever higher levels of funding are suggested. The total tax levy more than doubled in the 1960s (42-3/4 mills for 1960-61 to 100-1/4 for 1970-71) as a result of the first rate increase in about 15 years. The referendum held in Project Year 4 to increase education funding was defeated--a factor affecting the context in which the project sought to spread innovation to other District schools.

Also part of the financial picture is the influx of Federal monies into the district since the 1960s.

3. Desegregation. School integration in Greenville County proceeded from a freedom-of-choice plan in 1964* to a total desegregation plan instituted in February 1970 to meet a U.S. court order and assure that the system reflects an 80-20 white-black ratio. Greer schools were still adjusting to the changes brought by desegregation when PSP began implementation in 1972. The project office was housed in a new building constructed on the site of a school which was burned down earlier in the desegregation period. While racial tension did not emerge as a significant factor in the overall implementation of the project, in Greer as elsewhere, the changed composition of school populations presented problems and challenges to the traditional schooling system.

4. Shifts in school populations. Maintaining racial balance in the schools and adjusting to migration patterns are continuing concerns in the istrict. Re-zoning to achieve racial balance again was a complicating factor in planning of some PSP schools even in Year 5. Movement of people in the zone of School A, for example, reduced the ratio; the adjustments prompted by that were a matter of considerable concern in the school and in discussions with parents, and raised questions of the importance of continuity in the school experience of children.

Population mobility and, in particular, the unknown dimension of likely in-migration also presents difficulties. Enrollments in district schools are expected to rise K-12 in Greenville County (while U.S. enrollments will still be declining). However, administrators do not have the advance warning in the case of in-migration that they have when basing plans on known birth rates. In-migrants, largely responding to employment openings, tend to arrive in the middle of the school year, or else at the beginning, not having attended during the previous term. Throughout the project years (and into the expected future), Middle School in Greer found enrollment estimates regularly underestimated and suffered accordingly from over-crowding and staff adjustments. With staff allocated on a per-pupil ratio basis, shifts up or down in school enrollments sometimes provoke last-minute changes in personnel allocations.

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*See Whittenberg v. Greenville School District, Civil Action No. 4396, U.S. District Court for the Western District of South Carolina, Greenville Division, April 27, 1964. Suit was brought by some black students who sought transfer from a black school to an all-white school and, in effect, sought to integrate the system. The District Court ruled in their favor, and the end of the dual school system was in sight.

5. Upgrading the schooling system. In 1965, no elementary schools and only six secondary schools in the County were accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In the late 1960s there was a push for accreditation--in part to ease fears of incoming industries and residents about the quality of the educational system. By 1971 all the public schools were accredited. During the period of the PSP, several Greer schools were engaged in the planning and documentation work associated with different phases in the accreditation process--a factor which helped in some respects (requirement of self-examination) and increased stress in others (more time and paperwork) on top of project requirements.

6. Expanding programs. A memo from the Associate Superintendent for Educational Development to the Board of Trustees in January 1975 noted that by 1975 programs had expanded for the learning handicapped (few classes in 1965, 230 classes in 1975), in Fine Arts (stressed for all elementary and secondary students by 1975), Vocational Education (in all 15 high schools and three vocational centers), Kindergartens (two units in 1970, available to all in 1975), libraries and media centers (libraries for accreditation by 1970, expansion to media centers in all schools by 1975). In addition, the memo noted the emerging development of school-community cooperation, administrative decentralization into five areas, each with an area superintendent, and a commitment to individualize education "for all students" by 1980. At the same time as these moves were made to expand the program, setbacks in efforts to increase county funding caused program retrenchments, particularly during the last two years in which PSP operated.

7. Reorganization of the District. Asked about issues in the District at the time he came to the superintendency in 1970, the Superintendent promptly

identified several of the above items: creating a unitary schooling system ("a lot of resentment over in Greer and negative feelings about public education") and reorganizing the District adminstratively for effectiveness were among the first challenges. "The number one problem was funding." Reorganizing involved creating four area superintendencies, with PSP as a fifth; changing about three-quarters of the school principals in the District; and "creating an organizational pattern of elementary, middle and high schools out of a hodge-podge." [Superintendent, 12-76]. Out of this reorganization came the middle school pattern, including Greer Middle School. The establishment of new middle schools reflected a national movement. Doing so in some cases by building radically new open-space structures and without special staff training, compounded the problems of discipline.

8. Discipline/order in the schools was a large issue in the early 1970s in Greenville District as elsewhere. New types of school populations and staffs in newly desegregated schools and sometimes in radically new buildings presented difficult situations. And, again as perceived elsewhere, the problems were greater in post-elementary schools dealing with young adolescents and youth. "Greer Middle School was one of the greatest trouble spots...." [Superintendent, 12-76]. But by 1976-77, when the project was ending, the Superintendent could assert, "Discipline is not a big issue now."

Many of these eight factors converged in the early 1970s just as the Project was being designed. The situation called for accepting the challenge of innovation to find "a better way in education", and at the same time compounded the pressures on school personnel. The third PSP Director, who had been responsible for elementary education in the district at the time the project was planned, spoke feelingly of the demands of only two of the factors mentioned: desegregation and accreditation.

> We [the County] moved into the process of accreditation around spring 1969. We did hit the target date on schedule with all elementary schools. They had to achieve a philosophy statement as part of the ten-year cycle for accreditation. During that time we moved into a unitary school system. That was a

> terrible year. We had schools half to three-quarters way through the accreditation cycle and the people had dispersed because of change in attendance areas, modification of ratios, etc. So we had to write addendums to all those studies. But looking back, it was an excellent thing to have been in this process because it gave a purpose, and sometimes the purpose helps to reduce the anxiety, and this was great for this school system. (PSP Dir., 12-76; formerly Ass't Supt. for Elementary Education in the district)

## Innovation

The period which saw the birth of the Piedmont Schools Project was thus one of considerable change in the Greenville District--a period when some changes were thrust upon the system from outside (e.g., court ordered desegregation compliance), and others came from within (e.g., reorganization of the system). The latter often reflected national trends in instruction at the time--for example, introduction of middle schools by the new superintendent; commitment to individualizing instruction; interest in humanizing the schools.

The District was not a stranger to school innovation, as PSP staff members attested:

> The former Parker District [part of the County] was known nationally for innovative programs around consolidation.... They were beyond some of the things proposed for other schools.... Then there was the Appalach facility--a mill school in the Greer area. They began thinking of what they could do to make learning better when they moved into a new building [which became PSP School A]. They got into planning for team teaching and getting differentiated staffing before the project.... No, School A was not a pilot for PSP. You would find pockets of innovation like this throughout the county whether or not there was a PSP. [PSP Dir., Y/4, 12-76]

Again: There was multi-age grouping in School A, and open space in Middle School the year before the project.... The County was committed to individualized instruction. Getting the money for the PSP increased the speed of implementation.... IGE (Individually Guided Education) was in the district already: Middle School was one of the first 17 schools in South Carolina to be an IGE school; IGE was about three years old nationally. [PSP Coord. of Staff Development, Y/5, 12-76]

Despite these intimations of pockets of innovation and a disposition in the District towards some innovative practices, most Greer/PSP schools before the project were traditional in structure, organization and program, as we shall see below.

Two general observations round out this overview of the context in which PSP was born and developed. First, many of the factors described were part of the broad national scene around 1970 (desegregation changes in school populations, increased "discipline" problems, the Middle School movement, the individualization movement, interest in "open education"), while others had a more local configuration (e.g., residual conflict over consolidation, constraints on revenue raising, mobility and in-migration patterns). Second, some national issues were non-issues in Greenville County: declining enrollments, militant teacher unions, community control of the schools, for example. The presence or absence and the relative strength of these various factors shapes any assessment of the performance of PSP and the generalizability of its experience. The general and specific elements in the context outlined above offer a framework for interpreting and utilizing information on the details of the process of innovation.

Beyond these features of the District context, there were special characteristics of the project setting. To these we now turn.

## B. THE PROJECT SETTING*

### The Project Area: Greer, S.C.

The Piedmont Schools Project area covered 23.5 square miles in the eastern part of the county, between the Enoree and Tyger River Basins (see Figure 2). A significant proportion of project students (36 percent) came from the small part of the school district that lies within Spartanburg County. In May 1951

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*Sources for Greer description: PSP documents 1972 (Proposal) and 1977 (Final Report); Level II field notes; and Shaw, op. cit., for the County Planning Commission.

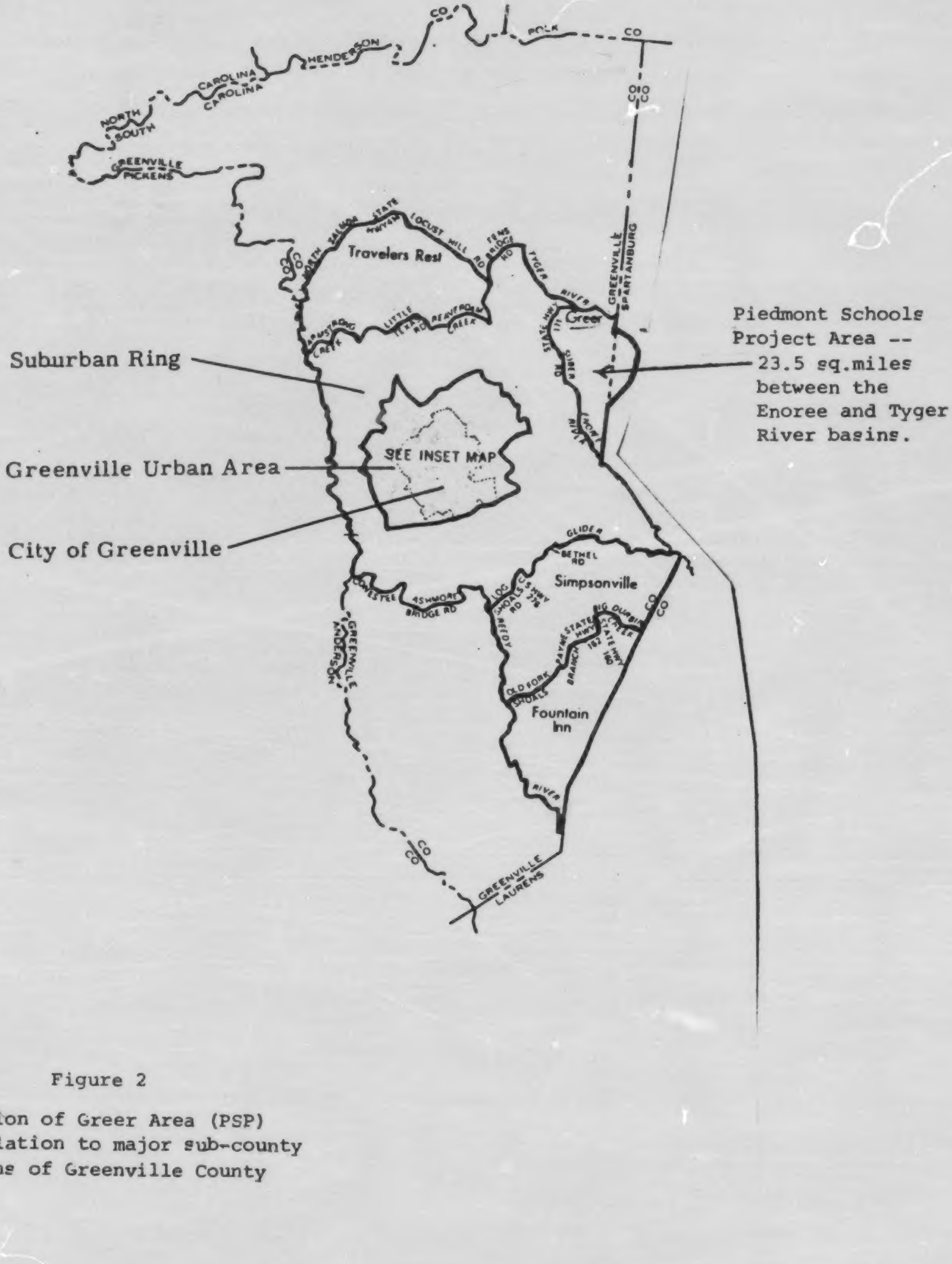
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
HENDERSON CO
POLK CO
GREENVILLE PICKENS
CO CO
Travelers Rest
NORTH SALUDA
STATE HWY
LOCUST HILL RD
TENS BRIDGE RD
TYGER RIVER
GREENVILLE SPARTANBURG
Greer
ARMSTRONG CREEK
LITTLE TEXAS RD
BEAVERDAM CREEK
STATE HWY 101
ENOREE RIVER
Suburban Ring
Piedmont Schools Project Area -- 23.5 sq.miles between the Enoree and Tyger River basins.
Greenville Urban Area
SEE INSET MAP
City of Greenville
GLIDER
BETHEL RD
Simpsonville
CONESTEE
ASHMORE BRIDGE RD
LOG SHOALS RD
U.S. HWY 276
REEDY
STATE HWY
BIG DURBIN CREEK
PAYNE BRANCH
STATE HWY 101
OLD FORK SHOALS
Fountain Inn
RIVER
GREENVILLE ANDERSON
CO CO
GREENVILLE LAURENS

Figure 2

Location of Greer Area (PSP) in relation to major sub-county regions of Greenville County the General Assembly of South Carolina authorized the Greenville County Board of Education to consolidate a part of Spartanburg County with the Greenville County school system and this segment of Spartanburg County is taxed for school purposes according to the Greenville County levy.

The focal point of the Project area is the city of Greer--the second largest municipality in the county. It lies half way between Greenville (12 miles southeast, population 60,000) and Spartanburg (15 miles northeast, population 40,000), and straddles the Greenville-Spartanburg County line. The population of the project area is approximately 20,000, of whom 10,500 live within city limits. Greer is essentially a self-contained community with high average density of population (2,600 per square mile in the city and 850 in the area).

Compared to the County (1970) Greer had a larger proportion of elderly, poor, and non-whites:

Elderly: 7.5% County; 10% Greer
Poor: 16.5% County; 22.5% Greer--below national poverty level
Non-whites: 17.0% County; 25% Greer; 35% in Spartanburg County area of Greer

Per capita income was 16 percent below the county average. Residents in the Greer area to the north and south of the city have income levels more than one-third higher than city residents.

The area experienced its greatest population growth rate in the 1950s and continued to grow in line with the county in the 1960s. City growth is expected to stabilize in the next decade while population increases in the environs, particularly in the area closer to Greenville.

Incorporated in 1875, Greer was a rural area until textile mills from New England began to relocate in the South. Three such mills were built in Greer. As well as being a major economic base for the community, they have played a major social role in building houses, financing churches and operating schools and recreational centers. In this sense Greer is a "mill town". Half of the employed people in the area worked in manufacturing in 1970. One quarter worked in the city of Greenville, most likely in non-manufacturing industries, and one quarter worked in non-manufacturing industries in other parts of Greenville or Spartanburg Counties.

Although textile mills are still the largest employers in the area, there has been some shift to more diversified industry which is likely to continue. Area employment is projected to increase by more than 39 percent to around 9,000 employees by 1990. Most new jobs will be in the manufacturing and personal service sectors. Growth of non-manufacturing employment in the city of Greenville is likely to lead to an increase in residents who commute there for employment.

The city proper has a deteriorating downtown area surrounded by rural farm areas and some suburban housing and shopping developments. In the heart of downtown, the sign "Colored" above one of two permanently closed entrances to an abandoned movie theater remains as mute witness to recent history. Two other theaters show a general run of movies. The area has its own newspaper (The Greer Citizen) and local papers from Spartanburg and Greenville, two local AM radio stations, and receives major national network and educational TV.

Social life generally revolves around the community and the church. There are sixteen fraternal and civic clubs and organizations in the area, six garden clubs and a number of women's organizations. Some thirty churches (all Protestant) serve the community, half of them Baptist. In the greater Greer area, 28 churches belong to the Greer Baptist Association.

Elements of this quick sketch of Greer have a bearing on the place of local schools within the larger district and on the operation of the project, as will be seen in ensuing sections of the report. The schools are located partly in the heart of the city, and partly in surrounding urbanized or more rural sections--all within the area described. Community involvement mechanisms in the project relied heavily upon the cooperation of clubs and organizations mentioned. And the general "self-containedness" of the setting had implications for relationships between the project and the rest of the district.

## The Target Population

The target schools of the PSP were six elementary schools, feeding into a single middle school and a single high school. Although reorganization in the district diverted some of the high school students to another school during the project, the eight original schools remained in the PSP throughout. They housed some 4,800 students in Year 1, 18.3 percent of them Black. Shifts in enrollment patterns by Year 3 brought numbers to 4,400 students, 21.4 percent of them Black (Continuation Application, 1974-75).

The size of the schools remained rather constant over the five years of the project, save that by Year 3 the high school population was reduced by about 20 percent because of the opening of a new high school proximate to the area. The racial composition varied with shifts in population but was fairly stable--save in School C which experienced a 16 percent increase in the percentage of Black students by Year 3 (see Table 1, below).

TABLE 1: ENROLLMENT IN PIEDMONT SCHOOLS PROJECT SCHOOLS--
FALL 1971 and FALL 1974

| Schools | 1972 Enrollment Totals | 1972 Enrollment % Black | 1974 Enrollment Totals | 1974 Enrollment % Black |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary A ........ | 321 | 16.10% | 343 | 13.41% |
| Elementary B ........ | 174 | 17.24% | 169 | 13.61% |
| Elementary C ........ | 377 | 16.45% | 393 | 33.08% |
| Elementary D ........ | 305 | 18.69% | 289 | 24.22% |
| Elementary E ........ | 446 | 18.39% | 403 | 20.85% |
| Elementary F ........ | 497 | 24.55% | 486 | 21.60% |
| Middle School (G) ... | 1,300 | 18.92% | 1,266 | 19.83% |
| High School (H) ..... | 1,357 | 16.43% | 1,055 | 22.18% |

This configuration of K-12 schools, student numbers, and racial balance satisfied some criteria for the Federal Experimental Schools Program. Other features of the populations met another criterion: presence of underachievement. The indicators noted at the beginning of the project were these*:

- -Intelligence tests in 4th, 6th and 10th grades suggested that there were more academically talented students in Greer than in the rest of the District, but there was no significant difference in scores on the Stanford Achievement Tests.
- -Dropout rates were increasing in 1968-70 (In 1970, the rates were: Greer 54.8%, South Carolina 50%, Greenville District 41.5%, nationally 33%).
- -Percentages entering college were declining while District percentages were rising in 1968-70 (35% Greer, District 42% in 1970). However, more Greer graduates were entering trade and technical schools (1970, 13% District, 20% Greer).
- -Poor attitudes: "Lack of educational reinforcement in many of the homes. Many students find school irrelevant and boring." And outmoded instructional environment: "Elements of the organizational structure, curriculum methods and some of the materials are outdated." (Project Proposal, March 1972).

A central challenge of the Piedmont Schools Project, therefore, was to initiate a major educational intervention in a significantly poor and racially mixed setting, and in schools with patterns of underachieving or non-achieving students who found "school irrelevant and boring."

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*See Appendix 1 for a statistical profile of the target area students, 1968-1970, for further details of enrollments by school, dropouts, college entry.

## CHAPTER TWO

## BIRTH OF A DREAM --
## DEVISING THE PIEDMONT SCHOOLS PROJECT

*"I have a dream..." (King)*
*"A Better Way in Education" (PSP)*

The Piedmont Schools Project (PSP) took as its motto, "A Better Way in Education". This "Better Way in Education" was no minor increment of improvement in existing patterns. It was no less than an attempt to realize a grand-scale dream of comprehensive, systematic, integrated change in a set of eight rather ordinary K-12 schools. What was the genesis of such a dream, and what prompted people to undertake the awesome task of seeking to realize it?

### A. FEDERAL STIMULUS TO "COMPREHENSIVE CHANGE"

> Since 1945, research projects, demonstrations and various kinds of experimentation have generated a wide variety of products, practices and ideas which hold promise for the improvement of American education.... Dissatisfied with the results of piecemeal or individual component changes, educators have sought the opportunity to address the need for total change by placing a number of these promising practices together in a comprehensive program [ESP, 1971, HEW/OE. Information letter sent out by Robert Binswanger, inviting school districts to submit Letters of Interest in participating in the Experimental Schools Program.].

In launching the Experimental Schools Program, the U.S. Office of Education proposed to use four Research and Demonstration strategies to stimulate experiments in wide-scale change in local school districts: (1) local planning and implementation, (2) comprehensive program designs for each local project, (3) five-year forward funding, and (4) "formative" and "summative" evaluation of each project*.

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*These strategies are elaborated and critically evaluated in: Institute for Scientific Analysis, Educational R&D and The Case of Berkeley's Experimental Schools. San Francisco, November 1976.

The heart of the Program was the promotion of *comprehensive change* in schooling. The *evaluation and documentation* strategy would protect Federal interests in high-risk Federal investment (formative evaluation to promote increased quality of implementation and summative evaluation to provide detailed assessment of the processes and effects of planned change). To induce school district participation in such a high-risk enterprise there was *five-year forward funding* (allaying uncertainties born of the fly-by-night quality of much prior federal support of local innovation); and an emphasis on *local planning and implementation* (to assure consonance with local wishes and contexts).

This set of R&D strategies was in itself highly innovative. Predictably the process of implementing them was not smooth. There were some critical gaps between intentions and reality (see, for example, Institute for Scientific Analysis, 1976). Nevertheless, the fact remained that the Experimental Schools Program, born under the Office of Education and largely implemented under the new National Institute for Education, was a bold program which both required and supported comprehensive change in schools by a new combination of strategies. Without the combination of requirements and commitments from the Federal agency, the impossible dream of the Piedmont Schools Project would have died aborning.

What did OE/ESP mean by "comprehensive change"? The concept was operationalized into two basic elements, which may be thought of as vertical and horizontal aspects of change. First, there was to be a vertical structuring of projects which would allow participation of students from the whole spectrum of K-12 public schools. Second, there would be horizontal comprehensiveness--an inclusion of all important components of the school environment including, but not limited to, "curriculum development, community participation, staff development, administration, and organization." [USOE, 1971]

Each local five-year program was to encompass approximately 2,000 to 5,000 students, with prime but not exclusive emphasis on low-income children. Within the target area, the whole school environment was to be altered such that components would be integrated and mutually reinforcing within and across levels of schooling. The theme of educational change was to be pervasive in the target population. Beyond the target area, however, it was envisaged that the ripples of innovation would affect more widely the more traditional approaches to instruction and governance in participating school districts.

There has been subsequent argumentation from hindsight about the meaning of "comprehensive change" and the viability of Federal strategies to promote it. Yet the broad elements of comprehensiveness as originally explicated by OE/ESP were clear enough to preclude settling for a lesser vision than holistic change in target areas, while still allowing much initiative in creating and translating local visions of a "better way in education".

## B. DESIGN OF THE PIEDMONT SCHOOLS PROJECT

In March 1971, the School District of Greenville County was one of more than 1,000 applicants submitting Letters of Interest to the Experimental Schools Program of the U.S. Office of Education. It was subsequently one of nine school systems to receive a planning grant. In November 1971, the Office of Education announced that the District had been selected as one of three sites to be funded to implement an experimental change program in the Fall of 1972. This was the beginning of the Piedmont Schools Project, implemented in the District, with Federal funding of $6.5 million over a period of 5.5 years beginning in April 1972 and spanning school years 1972-73 through 1976-77.

Greenville County School District had some track record in educational innovation, but past changes generally, as elsewhere, had been fragmentary and were planned by professional educators and implemented as pilot programs. In contrast, the PSP was comprehensive in scope and emphasized participatory planning--this in line with two major questions addressed by the Experimental Schools Program: Could a school system be responsive to the expressed needs of the community? Could it respond in a comprehensive rather than a piecemeal fashion?

The core ideas of the Piedmont Schools Project were first outlined in a Letter of Interest to USOE/ESP (May 1971) which won the District a planning grant (June 1971) to develop a full-scale design*. There was community involvement in both the planning and implementation processes. The design (submitted in mid-October 1971) was subject to much reworking based upon extended discussion with OE/ESP before final approval (March 1972). However, the statements of beliefs undergirding the project and the basic processes conceptualized remained constant from the early design period through to the end of the project. The basic beliefs were stated thus:

> -Each student, regardless of ability, has potential for learning and a flexible, responsive school organization will make it possible to offer viable alternatives to all youth.
>
> -The people served by a public educational program have the right and duty to define the goals and objectives of education and to evaluate their educational system in terms of that definition.

The Greer area was identified as the locus for the project at the point when the planning grant was awarded. It was the only community in the county where the configuration of schools had elementary schools feeding directly into one middle school and then into one high school; and, as noted above, it met other criteria of OE/ESP (around 4,500 students, indicators of underachievement, race, and poverty). Around 2,000 adults and students were involved during the planning period in examining the strengths and weaknesses and desirable objectives for the schools. The Project design, "in keeping with the desires expressed by the citizens and students of Greer" emphasized "meeting the needs of every child through staffing patterns, instructional processes, and various programs which individualize the learning process."

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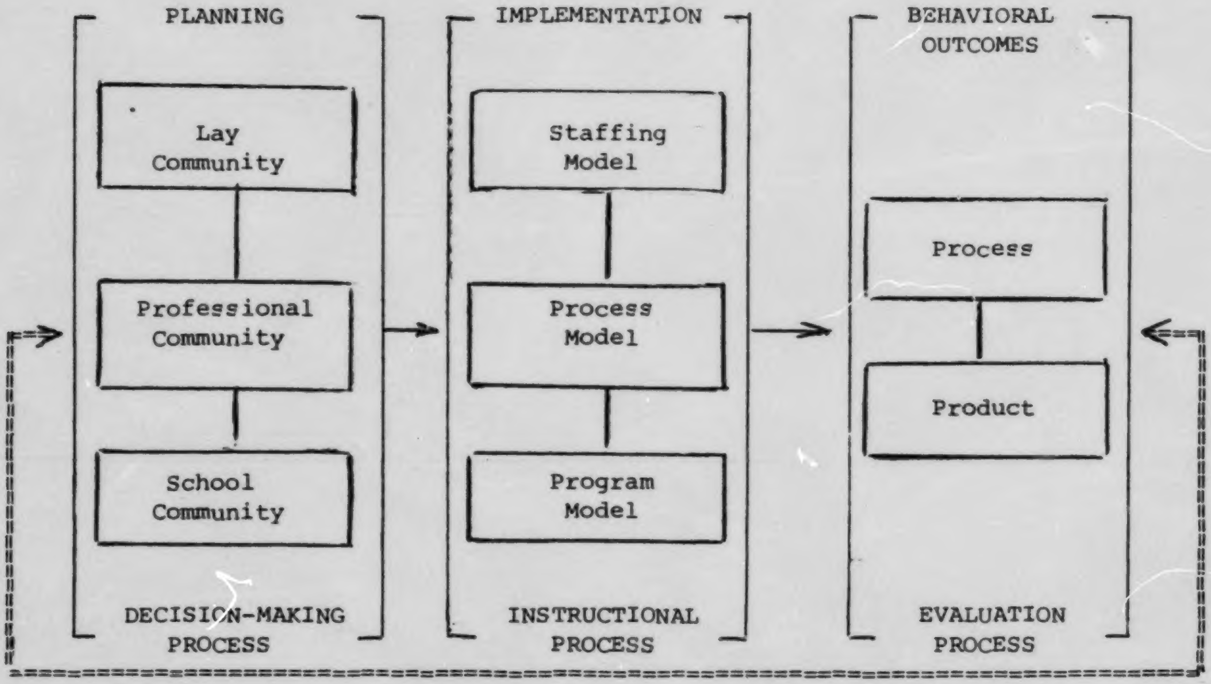
*Key concepts guiding the Project and the process by which they were incorporated in the design are elaborated in various sources, and summarized in the present report. Sources: GCSD, Letter of Interest (5/15/71), Project Proposal (3/15/72), Continuation Application (circa spring 1975). The lengthy process of negotiation and reworking of design is documented in a Chronology of Events Leading Up to the Final Award (Level II document included in Support Materials).

## Major Components of the Design

The three linchpins of the PSP, diagrammed below (Figure 3), were the decision-making process, the instructional process, and the evaluation process -- conceived as interdependent. To the extent that intentions were fulfilled, these processes would result in integrated comprehensive change in the opportunities, attitudes, behaviors and relationships of people in the schools and their relationships with the broader community.

Fig.3: FLOW DIAGRAM OF THE PIEDMONT SCHOOLS PROJECT COMPONENTS*


PLANNING
IMPLEMENTATION
BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES
Lay Community
Professional Community
School Community
Staffing Model
Process Model
Program Model
Process
Product
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS
EVALUATION PROCESS

*Source: SDGC, Proposal, 1972.

The decision-making process reflected the philosophy of participative management grounded on the premise that decisions at all levels of the project should be made on the basis of input from those most closely affected by the decisions. Structures were designed to offer vehicles for the involvement of the "lay community"--the citizens of Greer, both parents and non-parents; the "professional community", outside the project area; and the "school community"--administrators, teachers, students, paraprofessionals. The formal structures developed to facilitate the process were, in brief:

| | |
|---|---|
| For input of the "lay" community: | -Boards of Educational Cooperatives and The Cooperatives Board |
| For input of the "professional" community: | -The Board of Directors--supplanted by The Professional Liaison Committee |
| For input of the school community: | -Organized student groups<br>-Learning community teams in schools<br>-Instructional Improvement Committees in schools<br>-Project Instructional Improvement Committee<br>-Curriculum Steering Committee |

The Instructional Process design called for melding innovations in staffing patterns (the staffing model), in classroom organization, management techniques and instructional practices (the process model), and in programs in ten curricular areas (the program model). Some key features of the changed instructional process design were these:

| | |
|---|---|
| Staffing Patterns: | -Differentiated staffing, including: Program Manager and Facilitator of Operations to replace the traditional principal<br>-Teams of teachers, paraprofessionals, and parent volunteers dividing classroom functions |

| | |
|---|---|
| Classroom management & organization techniques: | -Learning communities with two or more teachers and 50 or more students<br>-Multi-age grouping of students<br>-Multiple learning modes: small groups, large groups, one-to-one instruction, independent study, out-of-school learning, cooperatively planned units, mainstreaming<br>-Learning cycle |
| Programs/Curriculum: | -Modified to include community emphases: Career Education; comprehensive Related Arts<br>-'Basics' related to real-life experiences<br>-Wide range of materials in learning communities and media centers to accommodate various levels of ability within mainstream education |

The evaluation process within the project was intended to provide decision-makers--administrators, teachers, students, parents--with information on which to base decisions. To this end, the evaluation team (known as 'Level I' to distinguish it from independently funded external evaluators, known as 'Level II') was to monitor the implementation of the above processes and provide feedback on whether it was operating as intended; i.e., evaluate process objectives. And it was to evaluate product objectives--defined as changes in student behaviors resulting from experiences in the project. The intention was that the process evaluation would relate the success of the project to the degree to which each component was implemented.

All three processes were designed with intent to assure "a truly individualized educational program" for students in project schools. Implementing any single component identified in the summary above (e.g., multi-aged grouping of students, or staff teaming, or a Cooperatives Board) would represent a distinct innovation in prior practice. Implementing all of them in mutually reinforcing fashion was the PSP vision of comprehensive, integrated change in the instructional environment that would be "A Better Way in Education".

Project goals. Ten goals were originally formulated in the project design and these were subsequently translated into a set of "process and product objectives". (See Chapter 2 Appendix for the detailed statements.) The goals reflect commitment to the processes sketched above: participative decision-making, instructional processes that promote individualized and personalized education, and related evaluation processes. At the level of attention to specific areas of student development, several emphases derived from community expressions of concerns and desires for Greer schools during the planning phase. These are summarized in the following excerpt from the Continuation Application:

> When the Piedmont Schools Project was being planned, a committee appealed to the citizens of Greer to examine strengths and weaknesses of their school system and to identify the kinds of schools they felt were needed in their community. Almost 2,000 adults and students, representing all sectors of the community, were involved in this effort. They agreed that the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic should be stressed, but with emphasis on relevance to real life. They described a need for adjusting the curriculum to the current needs of students, including necessary psychological and psycho-social skills, citizenship, and survival skills. Also, they identified a need to strengthen some areas of the curriculum. Specifically, vocational and occupational education should be made a more important part of the regular K-12 curriculum; and the expressive arts (drama, music, art, physical education) should play a central, not a peripheral, role in public education, K-12. (Continuation Application, 1975)

## The Heart of the Dream: The New Instructional Environment

In developing the project design, PSP planners drew upon a smorgasbord of innovations tested in varying degrees in other parts of the nation. Taken individually any given piece may be recognizable as having been tried elsewhere and, some would argue, "they didn't invent any of it". That would miss the point. Aside from the fact that component ideas and practices were new departures for the vast majority of participants in the project area, it has to be re-emphasized that the specifically PSP invention, the dream they dared to dream, was putting all the pieces together in ways that would be mutually supporting and bring about comprehensive, integrated change in the instructional environment.

One further component of the overall PSP innovation effort remains to be identified. This was the Process of Transference--the name given to the planned, systematic attempt to spread new ideas and practices elsewhere in the large school district. The design for this effort did not emerge until Project Year 3, and we leave until Chapter 7 below a discussion of the transference process and its effects. This process drew PSP back into the mainstream of the School District of Greenville County from which it was somewhat insulated during early years of the project. Before such effort to share innovation could be initiated, it was felt that primary attention must be given to the immense task of implementing the new instructional environment in Greer schools.

Creating this "new instructional environment" involved strategies and action to implement four key elements: learning communities; staff development; participatory management (also referred to by NIE as "the new programmatic authority"); and community and parental involvement and satisfaction. The next section of the monograph will discuss each of these in turn, summarizing the main components of the change strategy and offering judgments about their effectiveness.

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*"New Instructional Environment" is NIE's phrase (RFP, 1975) and the four key elements were designated by NIE. They are consonant with PSP intentions and activities and offer a sound set of emphases for discussing PSP strategies and effectiveness.

## PART II

# IMPLEMENTATION: THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF THE CHANGE STRATEGY

> *"For a dream comes with much business..."*
> *(Ecclesiastes 5:3)*

## INTRODUCTION

The business of translating the design for change into the envisioned new instructional environment involved five years of effort to operationalize four major concepts -- learning communities, staff development, participative management, and community involvement -- at school and project levels.

The heart of the new instructional environment was a set of learning communities in every school. Implementing the learning community concept involved major changes in physical setting and in patterns of staffing and staff-student relationships--a departure from "closed" practices associated with "traditional schooling" towards those associated with "open education", "humanizing schools", and "individualization and personalization" of learning.

A strong staff development component was a necessity in the overall innovative strategy, to promote and strengthen staff knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors that would support the other components of innovation.

"Opening" up the environment of learning and instruction requires changes in decision-making structures. Inside the network of PSP schools this change necessitated that hierarchical patterns of decision-making give way to a redistribution of programmatic authority such that authority for making decisions about the instructional program devolved to those most directly responsible for program implementation. This was most often referred to in PSP as participative management.

In relation to broader communities outside the schools, the "opening up" process called for implementing mechanisms to assure community input to decisions about schools, both from the lay community and from the community of professional education. Efforts to reach out to involve and inform citizens were expected to create a climate of increased parental and community satisfaction with the schools.

These components constituted the major focus of NIE/EPRC external evaluation during the last two years of the Piedmont Schools Project. The ensuing account of their implementation and effects is based upon quantitative and qualitative data assembled during these years, plus a thorough review of field records and data available for the earlier period (when evaluation had not been conceptualized around these components).*

Although the key question in examining project implementation is: "Were the various strategies effective in changing the schools?", we must keep in mind the question: "To what extent did it all come together?" For this purpose, the concept of "community" is used as an integrative theme. We discuss first the multiple aspects of change that were to take place in "learning communities" (Chapter 3). As we turn attention to staff development (Chapter 4) and participative management (Chapter 5) we consider the schools as communities and the project as a community of schools. And when we examine involvement and satisfaction with the schools (Chapter 6) we are moving outside the schools to consider their relationship with the diverse groups that constitute the "Greer community".

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*Appendix C summarizes in chart form the evaluation focus and assessments of the NIE design (1975) and offers schematics showing expected relationships among components of the new instructional environment, and between that innovation and small related studies which (aside from summary discussion of Transference and Outcomes in Ch.7, below) are not dealt with in the present report. In the NIE design, community input to decision-making was viewed as a separate component from parental and community satisfaction, with separate substudies required for each. In this report we combine the two (Ch.6).

# CHAPTER THREE

## LEARNING COMMUNITIES

### A. INTRODUCTION

> The learning community served as a school within a school, with the entire learning environment altered through use of teaching teams, differentiated staffing, and an individualized curriculum. Contrary to the traditional centralized decision-making process, the staff members assigned to these units made the decisions about the learning programs for students in the learning community. Each school formulated a systematic review procedure involving assessment of all available information on individuals. This procedure also provided information for designing appropriate learning programs.
>
> Units of varying sizes were used by most of the schools during the first two years of the Project with these sizes for individual communities emerging as those most feasible for Project schools: elementary 65-85 students; middle school 150-300; high school 350.
>
> Ideally students would have had almost all instruction within their learning community; however, this was never completely reached at the middle school, which was constructed in such a way as to isolate the related arts...at one end of the building. Nor was the ideal possible at the high school, where both the physical arrangement of the building and the basically departmental nature of the curriculum worked to prevent full implementation of the learning-within-the-community ideal. [PSP Final Report, Section 9, p. 3]

This PSP end-of-project summation reflects general changes achieved in communities within schools:

-The physical environment of most schools was changed, becoming more open in structure and flexible in use

-Staffing patterns and relationships were changed, involving some differentiation of function, teaming of teachers, and sharing of decision-making at programmatic level

-Student relationships were changed, particularly through patterns created by multi-aging/grading, regroupings for instruction, mainstreaming

-The orientation to individualization and personalization in the instructional process was translated in varying degrees through programs and through processes, including attention to learning modes, learning cycle, success orientation...

A telephoto lens or a microscope focused more closely on individual schools and learning communities would reveal differences--particularly across levels of schooling (elementary/secondary) but also among elementary schools. There were differences in degree of implementation and relative ease or difficulty encountered in the process. Everything did not come up roses; but it was a rose garden! Some of the commonalities and variations are noted in the ensuing discussion of selected aspects of change in the physical and human environment of instruction. In each case, "effectiveness" is discussed in terms of the degree of implementation and judgments about likely continuity based upon perceived commitment of staff to the innovation.

## B. OPEN SPACE AND ITS UTILIZATION

### Intentions

The original proposals of PSP do not offer explicit discussion of "open space classrooms" or the broader philosophical approach of "open education" under those terms. Nevertheless, the provision of physical areas which would be both larger than traditional (accommodating upwards of 60 students) and more flexible in use was clearly a basic intention of the PSP. By Year 3, project documents were explicit about the merits of "open-space classrooms or learning areas" in contributing to the process of individualizing--by permitting a variety of learning modes and activities to take place simultaneously and facilitating team teaching. "Although every classroom does not have to be remodeled into open spaces, different sized areas have been provided within the school for large-group, small-group, one-to-one, and independent learning activities."

## Implementation

> *FINDING: All PSP elementary schools and the Middle School were structured or restructured at the beginning of the project such that the prevailing area of learning communities could accommodate upwards of 60 students, and they largely retained this general structure for the duration of the project. The High School remained essentially an "egg-crate" structure throughout the five years.*

The physical boundaries for the PSP were generally established during the summer preceding the first year of the Project. Six elementary buildings and one middle school were either constructed (pre-project) or modified to provide open space for use by teams of teachers and students. The conversion of existing structures was more difficult in some buildings than others and overflow enrollments in some cases necessitated the use of portables for housing a learning community or part of one, as well as for activities such as related arts or special programs. Such modifications in structure as took place during the project did not significantly affect the above finding.

Utilization of space. There can be large areas of space (more physical openness in that sense) without its necessarily being arranged and utilized flexibly. The plan was for all communities to have easily movable furniture suitable for the various grouping patterns used, though "each open classroom is designed differently to suit the personalities of the staff and students who work in them, as well as the original plant design" [PSP, Cont. Applic., 1975].

> *FINDING: In all elementary schools learning community space was utilized with high to moderate degrees of flexibility; in the Middle School at moderate level; and in the High School at low level. (Nasca Mapping Scale)*

Flexibility was judged by observers on the basis of the extent of informal grouping of students at a variety of work areas throughout learning community space. Low flexibility on the physical organization index would be a traditional arrangement of desks with assigned seating for students; at the other end of the continuum, open, flexible use of tables and work centers with unassigned spaces. There were only marginal variations across elementary schools, all of which had high ratings on flexible physical space. Such variation as was observed tended to be associated with the nature of the building structure. Thus School C, depicted by some observers as an old, unattractive building, nonetheless had very large learning community areas, giving a sense of expansiveness and open space. School D had an awkward physical plant, was cramped for space and, regardless of renovations, the learning community areas tended to be more crowded than in other schools.

The Middle School, built on the most expansive open space plan, scored only moderately on physical flexibility. Each of the core original community areas covered space that could comfortably accommodate seven classes. Yet, Middle School was overcrowded and there was a feeling of being cramped even within the vast spaces. Within each of the large areas, in Years 4 and 5, there were observed to be carved-out areas, some of which were open and flexible, but which also included some separate, discrete sub-areas arranged traditionally.

The High School, a conventional three-story building, made no apparent attempt to increase flexible use of physical space. The low mapping indices reflect a pattern of individual student desks generally organized in rows. Such flexibility as was observed in use of space occurred in areas like shop, home economics, drama, communication classes.

The structural parameters of learning communities were created early in the project. Such changes as occurred later did not significantly alter the overall picture. Overcrowding in some schools (e.g., Elementary D and Middle) occasioned the use of portable classrooms; and shifts in age-grade patterns of students caused some redeployment of space. There were recurring pressures among Middle School teachers to reduce the size of the large learning communities (e.g., by partitions, visual dividers, etc.), but major structural change was not conceded during project years.

## Continuity?

How committed were teachers to open space arrangements by the end of the project? Asked if they would be happy, unhappy or not care one way or the other about specific changes that could be made in the physical environment, the general response was supportive of open space, with some variation across schools.

> *FINDING: While teachers in some schools would be happy to have one or two self-contained classrooms in their schools, for the most part they do not want to work in such a room themselves. And most teachers would be unhappy if flexible furnishings were replaced by regular student desks. (Year 5 Teacher Survey, 1977)*

There was a variation by school on these questions, with one elementary school (D) in which the responses were more negative: a) the majority of teachers in School D would be happy to have one or two self-contained classrooms in the school; b) none of the teachers would be unhappy if walls/dividers were erected and she had a self-contained room; and c) half the teachers would like flexible furnishing replaced by regular student desks.

## C. MULTI-AGING/MULTI-GRADING OF STUDENTS

### Intentions

The intention of PSP planners was that in elementary and middle schools, pupils would be grouped in numbers of approximately 75-150 per community, that the grouping would be multi-aged, and that while students initially might be placed in the community on a graded basis, this would be done by random selection. In the High School, students in the community groupings would range across several traditional grade levels and represent a cross-section of the student body, not grouped by ability, with placement generally resulting from the students' choices of advisors.

Among the advantages attributed to grouping students in this way in communities of at least double conventional class size, PSP schools emphasized: the benefits from wider socialization experiences; the opportunities deriving from student-student and student-adult interactions with a wider range of people; teacher-student relations sustained over longer than one school year to the benefit of both and of the individualization programs; greater possibility for matching student needs and learning styles with adults of compatible personality and teaching styles.

## Patterns of Implementation*

If the definition of open space learning communities calls also for at least two teachers working with students spanning at least two conventional age-grade level groups, then the patterns found in PSP by Year Five reflected both the original conception and some deviations from it. Figure 4 below summarizes the patterns found in the schools.

| | Students multi-aged/ multi-graded | Students age grouped/ single-graded |
|---|---|---|
| Open classrooms at least double normal size, with at least two teachers | Pattern 1<br>All elementary schools | Pattern 2<br>Middle School |
| Self-contained, one-teacher classes<br>a = walled structure<br>b = within open space LC<br>c = open plan room<br>d = rows of desks, etc. | Pattern 3<br>High School (a+d)<br>Elementary (a+c) | Pattern 4<br>A few elementary (a+c)<br>Middle School (b+d) |

Figure 4: AGE-GRADE GROUPING IN PSP COMMUNITIES AND CLASSROOMS (Based upon observation and analysis by D. Nasca, Y/4 and Y/5)

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*In this, as in several other areas discussed, there is considerable information available on the concept and the various levels of implementation in different schools--associated with particular issues and problems, and differences in perceptions among teachers and schools. The comparative analysis of school data is illuminating, but beyond the scope of what can be covered in the present document.

Only Pattern 1 conforms to the intentions of the project for multi-graded learning communities. This pattern was dominant in all elementary schools. The Middle School made an explicit decision not to multi-age/multi-grade its open class communities (dominant Pattern 2) while the High School did multi-grade/multi-age within the conventional self-contained classroom settings (dominant Pattern 3). Some elementary schools and some Middle School learning communities showed deviations (3 and 4) from the dominant pattern by school level. And there were deviations at certain times and locations from the random and heterogeneous patterns suggested in the PSP and the more general literature*.

> *FINDING: Elementary schools and High School all implemented multi-grading/multi-aging of students. Middle School did not. Within schools there were variations in the relationship between age and grade grouping patterns on the one hand and the size and openness of classes on the other. (Systematic observation)*

The implementation process proceeded at different rates and encountered different difficulties and levels of commitment across and within schools. Among elementary schools, for example, it went fairly smoothly in two (A, where there was more pre-planning, longer lead time, and gradual implementation; and B, the smallest school); with some early difficulties in two (C, with constraints of plant which were overcome; and D with awkward layout and heavy faculty resistance); and with considerable discomfort and caution in two (E and F). By Year 3, two elementary schools and Middle School had lagged behind in implementation and special in-service programs were launched to improve staff understanding and support of the concept.

Middle School never did implement the multi-aging/grading concept. Throughout the five years of the PSP, students in each of the three grades were relatively of the same age and were promoted by grade. There was some slight exception in the case of Related Arts and Physical Education classes where there was some mix of the three grades. But in the instructional environment of learning communities, the concept was not implemented even experimentally in one place or for a short time. It was "explored", "examined", "discussed", "investigated" by a Task Force--and then rejected.

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*Why things happened this way is a subject of interest but beyond the possibility of the summative judgments being made in this section of the Report.

The High School, with its highly traditional plant and low ratings on flexible use of space, nevertheless did implement multi-age grouping for instruction (grades 9-12). Most courses were open to students regardless of age--with the exception of informal age grouping associated with some sequential courses (e.g., in foreign languages). Further, the advisee system (discussed below) strongly promoted cross-age/cross-grade relationships among subgroups of students.

> *FINDING: PSP implemented multi-age/multi-grade grouping of students in all elementary schools and in the high school short course system and advisee groups. The concept was not implemented in Middle School learning communities.*

## Continuity

Multi-age/grade grouping was one of the more difficult concepts for some staff to comprehend and implement*. Interviews and survey data from the last year of PSP suggest variable commitment to the practice. Concerning the range over which to multi-age/grade, there were partisans of three-age/grade span (School B), and more often of two-age/grade span in elementary school communities. Some staff had heavy commitment to the concept (e.g., B and C schools); others had qualified commitment (e.g., "It's a good thing, but teach gradewise at primary level as they adjust to school"); and for some the concept remained difficult ("This school has never understood the philosophy of multi-aging or exactly how it works--the primary teachers particularly" -- School E).

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*Available documentation is illuminating on several issues and questions not elaborated here, such as: patterns of introducing multi-aging/grading; ways of grouping and assigning students; the influence of physical plant; faculty reluctance and resistance; over what ages/grades to group; which criteria to use in assigning students; defeat for multi-aging or victory for participatory decision-making at Middle School.

This diversity of feeling is confirmed by end-of-project survey data. Asked in Year 5 whether they would feel "happy", "unhappy", "wouldn't care one way or the other" if a decision were made that next year all the students you teach were in the same grade, teachers offered varied responses. Among elementary schools, clearly teachers in School B were disposed to continue the practice, and teachers in School F were disposed not to, with the majority of teachers in Schools A, C and D being neutral. Breakdown of data by learning community highlights the fact that negative responses were associated with fewer than one third of the elementary learning communities (10 out of the total of 33), with a slight tendency for more teachers of younger children to reject the concept--supporting other evidence that primary level teachers felt more discomforted than others by the concept*. Interviews with high school teachers suggested a generally favorable disposition towards multi-grading for instruction, but a desire for more "prerequisites" in certain subject areas.

> *JUDGMENT: At the end of the project, the level of commitment to multi-grading of students for instruction varied from strong to low across schools, and was variable within a few schools. Many teachers were neutral to the practice (wouldn't care if it continued or did not) which suggests possible shift away from it might occur in some elementary communities, and possible timeliness to experiment with it in some middle school communities.*

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*See interviews with program managers. Also, teacher volunteered comments in open-ended questions about aspects of PSP "you would be happy to see changed next year" and "what you would do differently if you had it to do over". Of the 57% who chose to comment, multi-grading was the dominant concern, with strongest feelings apparent in elementary schools E and F (10 and 12 mentions, respectively). Note that these schools operated with larger teams (School E had three 3-teacher teams, School F had five 3-teacher teams, whereas other elementary schools tended to favor 2-teacher teams).

## D. DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING IN SCHOOLS

### Intentions

PSP staffing was differentiated as a partial response to objective #8: "To develop, implement, test, and refine an organizational model, K-12, that will facilitate and encourage individualized and personalized educational programs. New positions and titles were introduced, each intended to reflect an innovative departure in role and function. Each individual school was staffed by:

- An administrative team consisting of a Program Manager and a Facilitator of Operations--the first being responsible for instructional program, and the second for non-instructional administrative tasks. Elementary Schools had half-time Facilitators. Because of their size, the Middle and High Schools had full-time Facilitators and Assistant Program Managers.

- Learning Community Teams, staffed with at least two (and up to ten--Middle) teachers, each team headed by a Learning Community Coordinator who was to be the instructional team leader not a quasi-administrator), assign tasks to members in keeping with their strengths and talents, coordinate the schedule of activities for students assigned to the community, and also teach.

- Paraprofessionals. There were two types: (a) Related Arts Paraprofessionals - a component field-tested at elementary level to determine whether a quality program in music, art, physical education, related arts, and career education could be developed using paras. (At Middle and High, professionals were employed.) (b) Other Instructional Paraprofessionals were assigned to assist teachers with instructional tasks (including follow-up small group instruction, grading, administering diagnostic tests; managing systems used with self-pacing programs).

A fuller description of the rules and functions of the various staff positions is provided in the PSP Plan (1972) which also spells out some of the qualities sought in staff, and in the Differentiated Staffing component of PSP's Final Report (1977).

## Implementation

> *FINDING: During the five years of the project each PSP school was staffed by administrative teams (Program Managers and Facilitators of Operations), learning community teams (teachers, one of whom was the leader or coordinator), paraprofessionals, and, in varying degrees, had assistance from volunteers from the broader community.*

The more interesting question is not whether such staff assignments were in fact made (they were), but rather: To what extent were expectations about the innovative roles realized? These were all new roles, requiring different relationships, behaviors, apportionment of authority and responsibility, from those associated with traditional staffing models. Even when the name remained the same -- "teachers" being the prime case -- roles were different. Thus teachers were to be "facilitators of learning" rather than dictators of knowledge and would work in a context radically different from the traditional (open space, teaming relationships, multi-aged/graded students, individualized instruction, etc.), requiring a host of skills, dispositions, knowledges that had to be developed on the job.

While our prime emphasis will be on teacher teams, it is pertinent to summarize two other experiments in staffing within PSP: first administrator teaming, an experiment which we judge not to have worked out as planned; and second, the utilization of paraprofessionals, an experiment judged to be successful. These experiments are reviewed below as a prelude to Section E where we focus on teacher teaming.

### Administrator Teaming

> *FINDING: Throughout five years and in all schools, the program manager and facilitator of operations roles never fulfilled original intentions of being equal and complementary. The program manager role and status dominated.*

A division of labor in which the Program Manager would supervise the instructional program and the Facilitator of Operations the non-instructional (maintenance, housekeeping, cafeterias, school buses, reports, purchasing, data processing, etc.) ideally would capitalize on complementary abilities of two administrators--and is probably the dream of traditional principals beleaguered by demands that pull them away from concentration on instructional program.

The complementary-but-equal teaming relationship intended by PSP was not achieved. Throughout project years, facilitators were perceived as having lower status roles than program managers and program managers were treated generally by people outside and inside the schools as chief administrators, much as traditional principals. During early stages of the PSP, both facilitators and program managers were vocal about the problems of their role relationships and some time and energy was devoted in staff development to this area. However, the difficulties were not resolved and by the end of the project facilitators seemed to have bowed to what seemed inevitable erosion of their intended role and equal status. Teaming relationships worked somewhat better at high and middle school levels (where facilitators were full-time in the schools) than elementary; but there, too, they were viewed as valuable but not equal status members in the administrative team.

Why didn't it work? These are some factors mitigating against the success of the experiment:

-Four former principals were appointed as PMs in their existing schools and were already perceived there as "principals" by staff and community.

-The program managers in all cases occupied the offices previously occupied by the principal. The facilitators were located elsewhere--in four cases in the outer office of the administrative suite alongside the school secretary.

-Elementary schools shared half-time facilitators which suggested to the school communities secondary importance and meant that half of the time they were not in the school to be "teamed" with.

-District communications addressed to principals were sent to Program Managers. Although both PMs and facilitators attended district meetings, district procedures never did respect differentiated functions and roles in communicating with schools.

-Parents and community members with a problem would come to school to talk with a PM (perceived as principal), even if the problem area was one in which the facilitator had primary responsibility.

-Turnover of administrators. Over the five-year period there were 14 program managers in the eight positions; and 11 facilitators in the five facilitator positions. Lack of stability of relationships would tend to make it more difficult to learn new roles and relationships and to assert them to other people.

In short, it seemed to be a Pygmalion-like situation: the paired administrators were not equals because they were not treated as equals. Any efforts that may have been made to overcome these factors were not documentd; whatever they may have been, they were not ultimately effective.

> *JUDGMENT: While PSP experience may be of interest to those contemplating administrative differentiation and teaming, the PSP was not a good field test of the concept. Others seeking to experiment in this area should expect the problems noted above and plan specific measures to counter them.*

Paraprofessionals*. The group of adults who worked in learning communities in PSP schools included professional teachers, paraprofessionals of two types, and volunteers. Paraprofessionals were an important part of the staffing structure in every school. In a broad sense they were included in references to school staff as a "team" and they were an integral part of the staff. However, the patterns of utilization of the "paras", as they were called, did not include major involvement in "team planning" and "joint decision-making" -- phrases used to refer to activities in the precinct of teaching professionals.

Instructional paraprofessionals were viewed as "valuable and vital members of the educational team" (PSP, 1977, Sn. 12). Their numbers ranged from a low of one "para" assigned to the smallest elementary school to a high of six "paras" assigned to High School. Patterns of utilization of these staff members varied. Some were assigned permanently to reading laboratories, for example; others were scheduled to work first with one learning community and then another on a rotating basis. Most of the direction for their daily duties came from the learning community coordinators. Given these patterns of utilization, the instructional paras were important in every school but not integral to the teaching team in a given learning community, in the sense of being part of the daily team planning sessions and curricular development.

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*For a more detailed description of paraprofessional roles, functions and effectiveness in PSP, see PSP, Final Report (1977), Section 11 (Related Arts) and Section 12 (Instructional Paraprofessionals). Neither the "paras" nor the administrator teams were the focus of detailed study in the external evaluation design.

> Most outstanding in the contributions of the paraprofessionals was the help they gave in individualizing the instructional program and in enhancing the role of the professional educator. Paraprofessionals became valuable and vital members of the educational team. Another tremendous success was the positive image they projected of the school to the community. (PSP, Final Report, 1977, Sn. 11, p. 5).

Related Arts paraprofessionals provided instruction in art, music and physical education in elementary schools. Project Resource Coordinators (curriculum consultants) in these subject areas were responsible for training, coordinating and planning with the paras and for assisting in merging them into the learning communities. There was a team of three related arts paras in each of the six elementary schools (covering art, music, and physical education respectively) with a seventh team dividing its time between the two largest elementary schools.

This approach to Related Arts was designed to meet project goals for the arts (identified in part through community involvement in the planning stage), and to test whether it was a viable alternative to employing itinerant professionals in these special subject areas. Overall judgment? -- Yes, it was a viable alternative. The amount and quality of instruction in art, music and physical education in PSP elementary schools surpassed what could be provided by visiting professionals. The paras cost about half what full professionals would cost; hence increased time for a given price, while professional skills were shared effectively over a large number of schools*.

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*The whole issue of Related Arts paras and program in PSP is worthy of more attention than is possible in this report. Note that "students made substantial gains in test scores in both physical education and music (there were no tests in art)". (PSP, Final Report, Sn. 11)

Aside from providing a quality program, the Related Arts paras were valued in the schools because they furnished an obvious way of assuring released time for teachers to do team planning. In School B, the smallest elementary school, staff desire to involve the Related Arts paras in planning interdisciplinary units prompted effort and ingenuity in manipulating schedules so that paras could be involved in planning sessions when new units were developed.

> *JUDGMENT: Paraprofessionals were valued and effective members of school staff. They increased the possibilities for individualizing instruction, assured a quality Related Arts program in elementary schools, and made it possible for teachers to have released time for team planning.*

## Continuity

The question of commitment to the concept of administrator/facilitator teaming and the use of paraprofessionals in instruction is interesting but academic. The District did not continue facilitator appointments at the end of the project. School administrators would have liked such continuity, but (much in the way some teachers like to have paraprofessionals) primarily because they represented an increase in staff over traditional arrangements--a sharing of the load borne by the school principal. The division of labor would theoretically be feasible in the larger schools (secondary level), but it does not seem likely that assistant principals would accept the relatively lower professional status that came to be ascribed to facilitators of operations; nor is it clear that such division of labor would necessarily furnish the best leadership in a school.

As to commitment to the paraprofessional components of differentiated staffing, the overall judgment is that this commitment was high among PSP staff--not just because paras shared the workload but because in many cases they were perceived to make a significant contribution to instructional and personalization goals by providing quality Related Arts instruction in elementary schools, by making possible more individualization of instruction in other areas, and by increasing the range of adults that students could relate to in the schools.

As with the facilitators of operations, the question of retaining project "paras" was rendered academic by Year 5, for the School District was unable to finance the extra staff in schools once federal support ended. While this occasioned lament and much disappointment among staff in elementary schools, the general tenor of comments from program managers in end-of-project interviews was that the schools would continue differentiated staffing with such aides and volunteers as were available to them, and that it would be harder but not impossible to maintain programs and processes without the extra help.

The facilitators and the project "paras" were add-on personnel within the framework of PSP. But the teachers were not. Hence the importance of a focus on the new ways in which they were to work together in the project staffing model. In that context the principal innovation was "teacher teaming".

## E. TEACHER TEAMING

### Intentions

PSP documents contain many references to teacher teams, and teacher teaming was rated among the most important attributes of learning communities (Year 5, Attribute Ranking instr.). However, there is no elaboration of the concept of 'teaming' as such in the documents. By Year 3, project self-reports contained statements of this order (Cont. Applic., 1975):

> -"Teachers are involved in a cooperative planning and teaching approach which requires joint decision-making."
>
> -"Learning community teams achieved different degrees of sophistication in team planning."

It was clear from the outset that teacher teams were intended to share open spaced learning communities and work together to individualize instruction for students in their communities; and the PSP plan identified major aspects of the role of Learning Community Coordinator--a teacher with special responsibilities. But the dimensions of teaming were not spelled out in the plan. Rather they seemed to evolve in the process of implementation.

Among the advantages of teacher teaming, PSP noted: complementarity of teaching strengths; increased possibility for individualizing instruction; group awareness of each child; staff as examples of cooperation for students; the whole instructional process being greater than the sum of the parts because of discussion, debate and critical thinking in the group of teamed teachers. (Cont. Applic., 1975)

### Implementation of Teaming

Size of teams. The number of full-time regular classroom teachers employed in a learning community is a valid indicator of the size of the community and the size of the basic teacher team. Different patterns emerged in the PSP schools over the five years of the project:

Schools A and B - 2-member teams throughout the five years
Schools E and F - 3-member teams consistently in E and common in F
Schools C and D - More variation. Teams of two to four teachers over time. Trend to fewer teachers and more communities in Years 4 and 5.
Middle School: - 4-10 member teams Years 1-3; 5-8 member teams, Years 4 and 5.

Opinions differed on the relative advantages of teams of two to four people in the elementary schools, and at Middle School there was strong advocacy of limiting teams to around five teachers ("Never, never over five, is my advice!"--PM, Middle School, Year 5).

> *FINDING: Throughout the five years of the project, teachers in PSP elementary and middle schools were assigned to teaching teams with daily planning periods scheduled. High School continued single-teacher, self-contained class teaching, with the exception of three team-taught courses implemented during the last three years of the project.*
>
> *FINDING: The size of teacher teams (hence learning community numbers) varied across schools and, in some schools, over time. By the end of the project, elementary schools generally favored 2-3 member teams and Middle School 5-member teams.*

Team practices (Years 2, 3, 4). Year 3 self-reports from schools (Cont. Applic., 1975) contain intimations of need for help in "development of teaming skills" and references to the periodic use of planning time for "professional growth and development in team teaching". Problems most frequently cited concerned the need for skills in long-range planning and in developing goals and objectives (associated with individualization programs). There were references, too, to in-service workshops in interpersonal communications, the need for more open communication among team members, and the importance of present teachers being involved in selecting and orienting new teachers.

Teacher self-reports in Years 2, 3, and 4 (surveys 1974-75-76) also convey some dimensions of teaming as it evolved in the project schools. In brief:

- *Assignments* to LC teams were seen as effective by a large majority of teachers in elementary schools (except School D) and in Middle School. Assignments were based mainly on teaching strengths/expertise in Middle and High Schools, but not in elementary schools (save School B). Faculties in all schools affirmed: "I can utilize the strengths of other teachers in the learning community."

- *Interpersonal relations* were viewed as good by most teachers in most schools; but in some schools, in some years, there were significant minorities (over 25 percent) who did not feel "teachers respond to each other's needs", or "have open communications" or "trust one another's motives and abilities".

- *Team planning* (elem. and middle). The majority (over 75 percent) in each elementary school said that "multiple criteria are used to select objectives" and that "team planning occurs with broad goals selected by teachers". A large minority (over 25 percent) in Middle School did not agree with these statements.

- *Self-improvement.* Only a small minority (less than 25 percent) of faculty per school averred that a self-improvement program was structured and functioning with mutual critique by staff via recorded observation and review of teaching plans.

These summary data convey a strong emphasis on interpersonal aspects of teaming, confirmed in Year 4 interviews with program managers. The PMs were able to describe, with specific illustrations, the strategies that they used in hiring and assigning teachers. They conveyed that they tried to make selection of new teachers participatory to the extent feasible; i.e., to involve potential teammates in the process of selecting a new teacher or aide. Thus, aside from ascertaining technical competence and given a choice (which was not always possible), hiring took into account personal characteristics; and assignment to communities, it was averred, was made based on perceived individual strengths of teachers (complementarity sought) and personalities (compatibility sought).

Conceptualizing 'Teaming'. Early documents, as we noted, gave little indication that teaming involved much more than assigning teachers to work together and according them joint planning time, with the intent that they share responsibility for individualizing instruction of students in their learning community. By Year 4, observation and interviews confirmed that practitioners viewed teaming as a critical attribute of learning communities (Attribute Ranking Instr.) and that they had developed a sense of some important dimensions of effective teaming. An external conceptualization was developed in Year 5 to give explicit formulation to these dimensions and to guide a mini-study of learning community teams*.

Teaming may be conceptualized as a function of three levels of interdependence--pooled, sequential and reciprocal (Smith & Reith, 1971). Only reciprocal interdependence requires physical proximity of team members for effectiveness; it characterizes the PSP-type situation where teammates operate in shared physical space and engage in similar activities designed to increase the effectiveness of shared goals. Reciprocal interdependence, in turn, may be seen as having four levels of increasing complexity (cf. Cohen, 1976), each level encompassing those below it:

Level 1: *(lowest)* Exchange of students - to increase individualization through reducing variance within groups and decrease group size. In PSP this practice occurred primarily in language arts, including reading, spelling, handwriting, creative writing, and English, and in mathematics.

Level 2: Sharing of materials - to increase the number of options available for meeting needs of individual students; e.g., ditto worksheets and games acquired or produced by teachers and shared by teammates.

Level 3: Common planning - again to increase the number of options available to students, individual units, learning centers, full year courses, etc. may be jointly planned. Joint planning is higher than sharing because of the potential transfer effects inherent in planning together--it can generate ideas and processes potentially useful in a variety of situations, whereas sharing tends to be restricted to specific materials for specific events.

Level 4: *(highest)* Planning and implementing -- the highest level recorded in PSP involved joint planning to develop and implement instructional programs. Teachers planned specific events (e.g., units, learning centers), then subdivided labor needed to assure a broad range of options for all students in the learning community. At Level 4, reciprocal interdependence is seen as a variety of acts that increase the range of options for all children within a learning community.

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*The conceptualization derived from a review of recent literature (especially Smith & Reith, 1971, and Cohen, 1976) modified on the basis of observation and interviews with PSP staff, by D. Nasca.

Levels of teaming implemented in PSP. The above conceptualization was used in a Year 5 mini-study of 14 elementary learning communities. The study focused on communities that included grade 3 or grade 5 students, to give control for relative level and type of subject matter and age range*. The data support the following findings:

*FINDINGS:*

1. *Reciprocal interdependence in teacher teams existed on at least four levels in the six elementary schools by Year 5.*
2. *The highest level (joint planning and implementing) was found in six of the 14 communities studied, the lowest level (exchange of students) was found in five. The high/low distribution was not strongly associated with either the grade range included or the number of years teachers had worked together in a team.*
3. *There was variation among schools and within schools in level of teaming. All but one school had a sample team at the strongest level of teaming; in the remaining school, teams studied were at lowest level.*
4. *Correlations between levels of teaming and indicators of individualization were low.*

The low correlation between teaming practices and indicators of individualization was judged by the investigator to be a function of the type of individualization management used in PSP (diagnostic prescriptive, see below) which may occur with or without reciprocal interdependence of teachers. It was judged that these factors affected the level of teaming: administrative climate supportive of teaming; staff turnover (lower turnover causes less disruptive shifting); nature of plant (good physical space makes teaming easier); small teams.

-The school with lowest level teaming had the poorest plant layout; a larger staff and more turnover of staff; and the PM offered that no teams were operating at the level he would like.

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*The principal investigator, Don Nasca, conducted a mini-survey of teachers in elementary schools concerning their time allocations and teaching assignments, teacher/student grouping practices, etc. by school; and then implemented an observation-interview process in 14 learning communities. Additional data were derived from the Year 5 Teacher Survey.

-The school with highest level teaming had specially designed space, stable staff, 2-member teams, and project manager commitment; also a longer period to implement.

-The school with wide range from best to weakest teaming levels had poorer space and staff turnover; but the project manager invested heavily in interpersonal skills, reality therapy, humanistic staff development, and working with teams.

At lowest level teaming, teachers emphasized student exposure to increased numbers of adults and/or easier assignment and movement of students as the main value of teaming. At highest level teaming, the major value was voiced as increased numbers of learning opportunities--the latter verified by observation (more learning centers, games, reading materials, bulletin boards, etc. than in lower level teams). There was a .67 correlation between level of teaming and the range and variety of student activities observed.

No systematic study was conducted at Middle School. Observers depicted departmentalized, grade-structured organization as prevalent. Teacher teams each had a member from the major disciplinary areas. In this setting the expectation is that teaming would manifest itself in interdisciplinary units and in the sharing of materials within content areas across grade levels (cutting across LC teams). There was relatively low level evidence that this happened consistently in Middle School.

At High School, learning communities as originally conceptualized with teams of teachers were not implemented, nor was the idea of interdisciplinary team teaching implemented save sporadically. Three courses developed by teams over the five year period illustrate variations in approaches. In one Language Arts/Social Studies team, the two teachers worked independently teaching alternate classes; a second team, working in the same subject areas, coordinated preparation and interacted during class. The two teachers of a third--Music/Drama--team worked together on basic topics and graduated to active participation by all students in planning and carrying out each project*.

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*The teachers involved in these experiences came up with recommendations for team teaching. See PSP, Final Report, High School section.

*FINDING: In High School there were problems in finding teachers who would work together as an instructional team. Only three team-taught courses were developed and it was concluded (by the PSP and external evaluators) that "teaming was not successful to any degree".*

## Characteristics of Effective/Strong Teams

The composite of characteristics of effective teams derived from a round of program manager interviews, supplemented in some measure by observation and by volunteered comments by teachers, was used to devise a rating question in end-of-project surveys. Only teachers who were members of teacher teams in Year 5 responded. They rated 14 attributes on whether they considered them 'absolutely necessary', 'a help but not essential', or 'not necessary' for a strong team. Table 2 shows these characteristics grouped according to the percentage of faculties in elementary and middle schools that considered them "absolutely essential".

The top ranking attributes heavily focus on areas of interpersonal relations and mutual trust (associated with a high level of reciprocal interdependence). Open communication among team members, flexibility and adaptability, tolerance for different educational philosophies topped the 'absolutely necessary' list, together with released time in school hours for planning.

The second grouping of characteristics lists those for which perceptions diverge across schools on whether they are absolutely essential or not. In School A and School C, for example, faculties strongly assert the need for having at least one team member with strong leadership skills, team members having similar teaching and learning philosophies, and sharing open physical space. In other schools faculties were more divided on the necessity of these attributes; e.g., School B teachers thought them much less important. In no school did more than 73 percent of staff consider commitment to teaming by the Program Manager as essential.

Whether or not to keep the same team together from year to year attracted diverse responses across schools ('absolutely necessary' said faculties B and D in large majority; 'not so' said those in Middle School, C, D, F). Rotating

TABLE 2: TEAMING. RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFIED CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG (EFFECTIVE) TEAMS. PERCENTS OF TEACHERS PERCEIVING CHARACTERISTICS AS "ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL." SPRING 1977. BY SCHOOL*

| | Considered "absolutely" essential by: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Characteristics | 75-100% Teachers | 50-75% Teachers | 25-49% Teachers | 0-25% Teachers |
| - Open communication among team members. | ABCDEFG<br>(90-100%) | -- | -- | -- |
| - Flexibility and adaptability of team members. | ABCDEFG<br>(79-90%) | -- | -- | -- |
| - Released time in school hours for planning. | ABCDEFG<br>(76-100%) | -- | -- | -- |
| - Tolerance for teammates with different educational philosophies. | ABCDFG<br>(76-93%) | E (54%) | -- | -- |
| - Regular meetings to discuss and plan instruction. | BCEF<br>(86-100%) | ADG<br>(63-72%) | -- | -- |
| - At least one member with strong leadership skills. | A (91%)<br>C (100%) | BDEG<br>(57-73%) | F (31%) | -- |
| - Complementary strengths of teachers in subject areas and instructional methods. | A (82)<br>D (79%) | CEFG<br>(54-73%) | -- | B (14%) |
| - Sharing physical space (students and teachers move throughout open space area). | A (82%)<br>C (86%) | DEF<br>(56-60%) | B (43%)<br>G (48%) | -- |
| - Commitment to teaming by the Program Manager. | -- | ABCDEFG<br>(56-73%) | -- | -- |
| - Similar philosophies of learning and teaching. | A (82%)<br>C (93%) | DEF<br>(53-67%) | B (25%)<br>G (46%) | -- |
| - Keeping the same team together from year to year. | B (85%)<br>D (79%) | C (54%) | A (36%) | E (23%)<br>F (13%)<br>G ( 5%) |
| - Allowing each team member to become learning community coordinator from year to year. | -- | B (71%)<br>F (60%) | A (45%)<br>E (31%) | C (14%)<br>D (11%)<br>G ( 5%) |
| - Staff development in interpersonal communication skills. | -- | ABCFG<br>(33-60%) | D (33%)<br>G (27%) | F ( 7%) |
| - Staff development in team practices. | -- | BC<br>(33-57%) | ADEG<br>(40-57%) | F (23%) |

EPRC/Webster/5-78

*ABCDEF are the six elementary schools. G is the Middle School.

the learning community leadership role, and staff development in teaming-related skills came lowest in the 'necessary' list of teaming characteristics*. Here too, though, in every school there were some teaming teachers who thought these characteristics were essential for effectiveness. Among schools, School A teachers tended to rank all attributes as 'absolutely necessary' in slightly larger numbers than did others, whereas Middle School teachers seemed more likely than others to feel attributes were "nice to have, but not necessary".

> *FINDING: "Open communication among team members" topped the list of essential characteristics of effective teams. Flexibility and tolerance plus released time for planning together, followed closely. For all other attributes [Table 2], there was variation across and within schools on whether they were necessary or not. (Teacher Survey, Year 5)*

## Were Essential Characteristics of Effective Teaming Present in PSP Schools in Year 5?

Teachers who teamed in Year 5 rated the same 14 items in terms of whether each statement was 'definitely true', 'partly true', or 'not true' of their learning community team in the last year of PSP. A comparison of the perceived necessity of a characteristic with the perceived prevalence of the characteristic gave an indicator of satisfaction**. The data indicated three patterns of response:

- School A teachers said that all save one characteristic prevailed in their school with more strength than absolutely necessary; i.e., all the conditions they viewed as essential, save one, were thought to be abundantly present in their school.
- Middle School (G) teachers, on the other hand, indicated the opposite: that all the characteristics perceived as essential, save one, occurred less than necessary for effective teaming.

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*This ties in with other data that suggest teachers felt they learned a lot about how to do things on the job. See Chapter 4.

**Table TG-17 in the Support Materials, shows mean rating of 'necessity' compared with mean judgement of the prevalence of the characteristic, per school. Table TG-18 shows discrepancy scores.

-School D teachers tended to stand out among remaining elementary schools, with nine negative discrepancy scores--a judgment (shared by the Program Manager) that prevailing conditions were not up to what they thought necessary for effectiveness.

These data support other findings that distinguish among the schools. Furthermore, two elements in the top necessity category were judged as not being definitely present by some teachers in seven of the eight schools: "open communication among team members" and "tolerance for teammates with different educational philosophies". The responses suggest some dissatisfaction in some learning communities--a perception that conditions obtained in their setting fall short of those necessary for effective teaming.

> *FINDING: In most schools, there was fair correspondence between indicators of what teachers thought essential to effective teaming, and judgments about whether these conditions prevailed in their schools. School A teachers judged their teaming situation as most effective, while School D and School G teachers showed notably lower levels of satisfaction. There was within-school variation, supporting other findings that the effectiveness of teaming varies by learning community in most schools. (Teacher Survey Year 5; Mini-Study of Teaming Year 5)*

## Perceived Value of Teaming

What difference does teaming make over working alone to expected benefits of teaming and to broader outcomes in PSP? In Year 5, at the end of the project, we asked teachers who had experience both in working alone and in team teaching to rate the comparative contribution of teaming to individualization (5 items), to interactions of people (4 items) and to student outcomes (3 items).

> *FINDING: Teachers experienced in solo teaching and in teaming judged that teaming made substantial contributions to individualization of instruction in all schools; to teacher/teacher, teacher/student interactions in most schools; and to student self-concept and learning rates in basic skills in most schools. They judged that teaming made no difference to student attainment of expected scores on achievement tests. (1977 Survey*)*

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*See Table TG-19, Support Materials.

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Across all schools, teaming (as compared with solo teaching) is seen as most beneficial to practices associated with individualization (ability to work with small groups; to increase the range and content of materials; to accommodate individual differences in rate, style and interest), and as having least impact on expected student test scores and mainstreaming. In terms of the quality and quantity of interactions among students and teachers and the quality of teacher interactions, most faculties ascribed moderate to high value to teaming.

Features of school-by-school response patterns concur well with data from other sources. School D teachers tend to have more negative perceptions of teaming value than other groups (save for individualization practices), and School B more positive perceptions. School F teachers share a relatively high level of positive feeling about the relationship of teaming to all the interaction outcomes.

> *JUDGMENT: The prevailing verbal endorsement of teaming taken with evidence of sporadic existence of highest levels of teaming, suggests that symbolic (attitudinal) adoption of the new practice was greater than use adoption. However, we note that some teachers felt that some conditions necessary for effective teaming were not met in their learning communities in Year 5*.*

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*Note: Lack of a well-developed staff development model might partly account for the gap between symbolic and use adoption suggested here. An SD model in which teaming had been clearly defined and elucidated as an outcome variable would have served as a good guide to identifying specific steps in the SD process and might have promoted more consistency in implementing teaming than was observed in the Year 5 mini-study.

## F. INDIVIDUALIZING AND PERSONALIZING EDUCATION

### Intentions and General Judgments

Individualizing education was a central goal of PSP, both supported and constrained by County-based curriculum policies during the life of the Project. PSP intentions for individualization were broadly conceived within the context of an overall philosophy of openness and humanization in education. Sometimes the terms 'individualizing' and 'personalizing' were used interchangeably, sometimes as complementary aspects of a focus upon individual students. For clarity in discussion, we will use 'individualizing' in reference to individualized instructional programs and 'personalizing' to refer to PSP's emphasis on personal development, interpersonal relations, and students' developing responsibility for their own learning and behavior.

In the statement of "Original Objectives" (1972), the various aspects of PSP's organizational model were intended to "facilitate and encourage individualized and personalized education"; and the staffing model and related training were to enable staff "to serve as facilitators of education and promote positive relationships". These were translated as "measurable objectives" (1975) thus:

- To provide the time and opportunity for instructional personnel to function in a capacity which will facilitate individualized education. (Process Objective #4, 1975)

Two other "restated Objectives" translated the general intent of individualizing education:

- To provide a variety of processes for individualizing instruction. (Process Objective #5, 1975)
- To provide various programs and materials in each curricular area for individualizing education. (Process Objective #6, 1975)

These, in turn, were elaborated in PSP planning into specific intentions for each curricular area and into specific processes for individualizing and per-

personalizing education.*

*GENERAL JUDGMENTS:*

- *PSP adopted or developed, and implemented a variety of instructional programs and processes designed to individualize education. Degree of individualization varied with subject area. The most prevalent form of individualized instruction was diagnostic-prescriptive (d-p) --associated with particular program and process choices. This type tends to emphasize teacher direction and management more than do highly student-centered forms of individualization.*
- *At the same time, PSP succeeded in implementing a variety of changes in the instructional environment which increased the quality of life in schools by humanizing and personalizing education. The processes used to this end were not always conceptually compatible with d-p instructional approaches.*

### The Program Model

The prime focus of our discussion will be on individualizing and personalizing processes in PSP, with reference to specific programs only as they illumine our understanding of implementation. Because it is important to understand the tremendous investment of effort and resources in program development, we offer here a brief statement of the emphases of PSP's Program Model together with some related summative judgments.

> Like many other components in the PSP, the program model was a comprehensive change model. The Project attempted to revise, expand, or otherwise modify all areas of the curriculum to provide the most exemplary programs obtainable. Almost all curricular areas were altered to some extent to accommodate the best and most productive features of programs already deemed successful elsewhere. No attempts were made to engage in pure research. Rather than "reinventing the wheel", the Project attempted to gather information about successful programs and organize and implement them in a local setting in a comprehensive fashion.
> [PSP *Final Report*, Section 8, p. 1]

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*For a detailed account of the various programs and processes, see the PSP *Final Report* (1977) and *Continuation Application* (1975). Appendix 2 of the present document summarizes the relationship between the broad "original objectives" (1972) and their translation into "restated measurable objectives" (1975).

Emphases. Three concerns guided the selection and development of programs. First and foremost was the purpose of meeting individual needs. Efforts to de-emphasize the single textbook approach called for multiple resources: self-pacing materials, teacher-made materials, specialized furniture, an abundance of audio-visual materials, instructional materials, and equipment. Second, was the concern to use interdisciplinary teaching. Instructors were to attempt to teach the interdependence of all subjects, rather than teach each subject as if it were a discrete entity. Third, was the attempt to expand curriculum without sacrificing previous emphasis on basic skills in language arts and mathematics. The expansion involved additional emphasis in such areas as career education and fine arts, and the broadening of traditional areas to include new dimensions such as Creative Writing and Drama.

Curriculum Task Forces. During the first two years of the Project, each of the ten designated curricular areas was the focus of study by a Task Force Study Group. Each Task Force was composed of the appropriate specialist from PSP (a resource coordinator) and three consultants--one each from the County School District, the South Carolina Department of Education, and a college or university. During PSP Year 2 these Task Forces developed position papers for each of the ten curricular areas. These went through an elaborate process of review by groups representing the school community, the lay community, and the professional community.* The subsequently revised papers are available in Appendix A of PSP's Continuation Application (1975).

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*Specifically: The Project Steering Committee, composed of one representative from each of the elementary schools, two from Middle and two from High; the Program Instructional Improvement Committee (all the program managers plus the Manager of School Programs), the Board of Cooperatives (citizens), and the Board of Directors (professionals in education).

*GENERAL JUDGMENTS:*

- *Through its Curriculum Task Forces, the adoption of purchased programs, and the developmental efforts of school staff, PSP achieved changes in varying degrees in all areas of the traditional and expanded curriculum.*
- *Programs were selected to promote individualized education and they involved substantial change in the quantity and use of resources.*
- *Interdisciplinary units were developed and implemented in some related subject areas. This was more prevalent at elementary than at post-elementary levels and was very minimal at High School.*
- *Instrumentation used to evaluate program effectiveness was inadequate to capture learning gains. Despite all the changes in curriculum and the emphasis on individualization, the major evaluative measures used by PSP were standardized, norm-referenced tests of achievement. (SAT and CTBS)*

## The Process Model: Individualizing Instruction PSP-Style

The fundamental characteristic of individualized instruction is that it is individually oriented and paced, as compared with the traditionally group-oriented and group-paced instruction that prevailed before PSP. There are many different ways to individualize and choices of particular programs and processes have substantial impact upon the particular kind of individualization implemented.

Figure 5 suggests four broad categories, orientations or philosophies of individualization, differentiated by the degree of student autonomy over learning objectives on the one hand and over medium of instruction/learning on the other.

The categories in the matrix do not imply any ranking or status or consensus on what is "best" practice; they are simply intended to be useful in a descriptive way. Individualization PSP-style, as elsewhere, reflects combinations and variations of the four basic types, with older (high school) students tending to have greater range of choice than younger students. Granted that there was such variation, however, the predominant orientation in PSP was toward Type A--individually diagnosed and prescribed instruction. In this

|  |  | Objectives |  |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | *School Determined* | *Learner Selected* |
| Media | *School Determined* | Type A<br>Individually Diagnosed and Prescribed | Type C<br>Personalized |
|  | *Learner Selected* | Type B<br>Self-Directed Instruction | Type D<br>Independent Study |

Figure 5. Types of Individualized Instruction*

pattern, teacher direction and management are heavily emphasized. The freedom of choice, lack of curricular constraints, and absence of standardized testing and grading associated with more student-centered forms of individualization--these were not generally characteristic of PSP learning communities.

> *JUDGMENT: Diagnostic-prescriptive individualization can be and is practised in traditional classrooms. However, the features of most PSP learning community environments (open space settings, use of learning centers, varied media, teacher teaming) facilitated and enhanced the potential for flexibility and openness in the environment and for individualizing learning opportunities.*

PSP commitment to the learning cycle as a process component of the individualizing strategy confirms the disposition to diagnostic-prescriptive forms of individualization. The learning cycle requires delineating objectives, diagnostic pre-testing of students, the provision of instructional alternatives, post-testing, and recycling. The learning cycle was implemented variably in different areas of instruction. Implementation required development of staff skills and of materials, and was somewhat easier in areas for which well-developed diagnostic-prescriptive programs were readily available and not unduly complex to manage (e.g., reading) than where the management system was more complex (e.g., IMS math) or available programs did not already incorporate a form of the learning cycle.

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*This matrix was developed by Jack Edling (Individualized Instruction, USOE-funded study, 1970) and used to analyze implementation of individualized instruction in a nation-wide investigation involving 46 detailed school case studies. Most schools visited used variations and combinations of the four basic patterns.

## Grouping Practices and Learning Modes

> "The crucial task for the teacher in any individualized program is matching the right student with the right mode at the appropriate time for the proper length of time to assist him in meeting a given learning objective." [PSP, Cont. App., 1975, p. 31]

Among the processes PSP implemented to promote individualization was a variety of learning modes. Small groups, one-to-one, and independent study approaches were deliberately promoted as alternatives to the prior tradition of large-group instruction.

Self-reports from four elementary schools and the Middle School in Year 3 (Continuation Application, 1975) recorded allocations of instructional time to the different modes approximately as follows: large (15-300), 20%; small group (5-14), 55%; one-to-one, 15%; and independent study, 10%. Although observers reported that there were some learning communities where this was not the pattern, it did predominate, partly as an artifact of time allocated to reading, language arts, and math.

Student perceptions of grouping practices confirm that a variety of learning modes was in effect and that alternatives to traditional classes (25-30) were more prevalent in PSP than in comparison schools.* By the end of Year 3 of the Project, PSP elementary school students as a group conveyed that they:

- worked one-to-one with teachers around twice a week
- worked with one other student more than twice a week
- were taught in small groups (4-13) somewhat less than daily **
- were taught in class-size groups (25-30) slightly more than twice a week
- were taught in a very large group (50+) somewhat more than monthly

They were involved in one-to-one, small group and very large group instruction more than students in the comparison schools, and in traditional-size groups less often. They reported, too, having students of different grades and ages in their groups "always" or "sometimes" much more than did comparison students. They were much less likely than comparison students to have assigned texts for subjects. And they said they chose what they wanted to learn slightly more than once a week and more often than comparison students.

High School students (9th grade) in Year 3 conveyed that they worked:

- one-to-one with teachers somewhat less than once a week
- in small groups (4-13) less than weekly, more than monthly
- in large groups of 25-30 almost daily
- in largest groups (50+) about once a month

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*There exists a wide range of data from student surveys 1974-1977 which could not be thoroughly analyzed for this report. These data cover attitudes to school, to teachers, to testing, etc., and student perceptions of various instructional practices. The findings included here are suggested by a review of readily accessible data on PSP and comparison schools with regard to grouping practices. The elementary statement is based on mean score data from Form II Elementary Survey 1974, 1975. The High School statement is based on data from the Secondary Survey 1975, 1977 for Grade 9. See Support Materials, Student Perceptions of Classroom Practices.

** Year 5 time allocation data were not accessible at time of writing this report; but the writer's recollection is that students were in small groups daily for considerable amounts of time, as a function of time allotted to reading and language arts, generally.

Like the elementary students, they worked much more in alternative learning modes than did students in the comparison school. And they said that students who were older and younger and in different grades than themselves were in their classrooms much more (75% of PSP ninth graders in 1975 said they "always" had such mix compared with 14% in the comparison school). Moreover, they conveyed that they chose what they wanted to learn more frequently (more than once a week) than comparison students and were more likely to say that most students in the school did a lot of work without much help from teachers.

> *FINDING: PSP implemented various learning modes to provide alternatives to traditional class instruction. Though traditional class format was prevalent at high school, students were heterogeneously* age/grade-*grouped in the short course system. The alternative modes involved small groups (particularly at elementary level) and some increase in the use of one-to-one and independent study.*

Teacher self-reported behavior and observer ratings of grouping practices and student activity confirm these patterns. A short account of practices in High School and elementary schools will give some sense of the nature of individualization in PSP and the way in which individualized instruction differed at elementary and secondary levels of the system.

### Variations by Level of Schooling

Elementary. The most generally sophisticated, and at the same time the most standardized, level of PSP individualization was for reading. The investigator (Nasca) found in Year 5 that the reading program was identical across PSP schools. It involved initial screening of students into above average, average and below average reading status, then assignment to various basal reading series and levels within them. Children could move to the next book in the series only after being tested by a County reading supervisor. Teachers could group students assigned to a series and level in as many or as few groups as they wished. The more groups per level, the more we infer that instruction was brought closer to the needs of individual students. In PSP elementary reading groups, the group size was from two to eight children.

Reading labs at two elementary schools and at Middle and High School supplemented classroom instruction in specific skill areas with diagnostic-prescriptive materials. Individualization in other language arts areas was an artifact of reading programs. Students were grouped for spelling, handwriting, etc. to give teachers time to work with defined reading groups; and paraprofessionals and aides played a heavy role in facilitating this process.

Students thus, definitely had much more opportunity than prior to PSP for individual attention based on skill needs and associated with basal reader progressions. However, Nasca found little evidence that individual variability in learning modality, interest, or cultural diversity was accommodated by this program. There was frustration on the part of some program managers (and presumably their staff) because of the constraints imposed by the programs.

> I guess I have resented the way we have been locked into the level tests. We would have preferred to have taught reading in a different way. I feel that we have been playing into the hands of the publishers. They have profited from the fact that we have had to purchase materials from them to have students pass their levels tests.... We wanted to instill in children a love for reading and divorce skills from the stories so we wouldn't read a story to death, which is what happens under a directed reading lesson, especially now we are tied into the unit and level tests.
>
> This was the reason we went to the Wisconsin Design, because we could teach our skills, and I think had we been given another year or so, building upon the child's experiences and teaching him a love for reading, our skills would have fallen in place rather than just teaching skills for skills' sake in order to pass a test.
>
> We found that the only way the children could pass the tests, and this came from one of the County Consultants, was to have the workbooks. Regardless of how well the teachers prepared and taught, the tests were worded the same way as the books; and the students were not able to pass unless they had used the workbooks.
>
> The County prescribes the programs.... That is an issue that bothers you. You are still locked into the County programs and yet you are expected to do innovative things in the Project.... It's a very frustrating experience. *[A PSP elementary school program manager, 12-76]*

There were deviations from the pattern described, but they appeared not to endure. One such variation involved an underground use of Language Experience Approach to beginning reading in an elementary school; but the program manager averred that he had to bring out the basal readers whenever the County reading supervisor came around. Neither that, nor an attempt to introduce a "Dialects" orientation to language development in some schools received the endorsement needed to create any generalized impact or alternative to the basal approach. In Year 5, School B was experimenting with an independent reading program in its upper-age learning community, and this allowed more individual variation in reading program. To the extent that this might be seen as a supplement rather than an alternative to the County program, such individualizing effort might be sustained.

> *FINDING AND JUDGMENT: In "basic" curricular areas, notably reading, PSP implemented individually paced instruction, but had little flexibility to diverge from County mandates in ways that responded to individual interests and cultural patterns. Expressions of a more responsive and personalized form of individualization than diagnostic-prescriptive did emerge, but they did not flourish or have lasting impact. We judge that this was because of curricular constraints imposed by the County and because the d-p influence was so strong.*

In math, individualization occurred in elementary schools wherever above-grade-level students at fifth grade had access to a teacher experienced in administering the IMS program. (Some teachers experienced problems with the system.)* Below grade-level students in grades 3-5 could participate in individualized Title I programs in Imperial Math, generally with a Title I aide to help. Most math instruction followed the Addison-Wesley math series pattern--designated by the County part-way through PSP implementation. Imperial and IMS programs involve precise diagnostic-prescriptive practices and were used according to management skills of individual teachers; Addison-Wesley provides a moderate level of d-p programming.

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*PSP experience suggests some of the difficulties encountered in implementing individualized programs generally, and the ways in which they were addressed. Were there time, we could elaborate the factors which influenced the degree and pace of individualization: (1) Levels of teacher knowledge, competence and experience in subject matter (early problems in elementary level math were more with the 'what' of the subject than the 'how' of individualization); (2) Availability of programs facilitating individualization; (3) Compatibility of available programs with County texts; (4) Limitations of selected programs placing heavy demands on teachers ("Never enough individualized materials", "a lot of work"); (5) In the case of primarily teacher-developed programs, heavy demands on time, energy and talents to develop objectives, materials, learning center activities, elements of the learning cycle, etc.; (6) Difficulties in mastering new and complex management skills; (7) Availability and utilization of curriculum consultants and paraprofessionals.

Individualization in social studies, health and science was virtually nonexistent, Nasca found, during his study of elementary learning communities in spring of Year 5. He found considerable variation in the way these subjects were taught: intact grade-level groups, multi-graded groups, six-week units, two days a week, and integrated units. But instruction was heavily based upon large-scale groups. As to the source of instructional direction in these areas, teachers followed curriculum guides or selected units in accord with their own personal and/or student interests. Deviation from the guides took place as a function of a teacher's self-confidence, expertise and flexibility.

At Middle School, in a general way, Grade 6 communities tended to operate more like elementary school and Grade 8 communities more like a high school. While there was considerable change in instructional programs, Nasca found that individualization occurred in relatively few subject areas. The major example was math, with both IMS and Foley systems available, and the Continuous Progress Spelling (CPS) system used at some levels for some children. These systems represent fairly high levels of diagnostic-prescriptive sophistication. Their use was an individual teacher decision, generally based upon previous training. Although Middle School did not have the curricular constraints imposed on elementary schools, they adhered to a strict departmentalized routine, with discrete subject periods. Teachers and subject matter teams were free to adopt a wide range of topics within the discipline. Continuity was provided by a traditional sense of what was expected and what factual content was thought appropriate for Middle School students. Observations over Years 3, 4, and 5 of the Project showed only minor variations in this pattern.

In High School, students spent most time in large groups or lecture modes, with some limited variations occurring via student-to-student tutoring, student-led discussion groups and large group presentations. However, the short course system helped to establish a pattern of interest groupings in multi-graded settings which was a distinctive characteristic of Greer High. Self-directed study, called Cooperatively Planned Units (CPU's) was a viable alternative to traditional instruction for a time. CPU's allowed students to design learning objectives, activities and evaluation, in collaboration with a teacher-advisor, for credit. By mid-Year 4 the library and all academic departments were offering CPU's. In Year 3, 10% students participated; in Year 4, 15%. In Year 5, however, more stringent review requirements from the State constrained further development of CPU's and by the end of the Project only the CPU in art for elementary children and the tutorial art program were left.*

### Personalizing Education and Building Community

PSP documents speak of "individualizing" and "personalizing" instruction, of "individualized" and "personalized" education. At times the terms 'individualized' and 'personalized' were used in apparently exchangeable fashion; at others not. Beyond the notion of individualizing instruction to take account of personal differences in learning styles and rates, there was a clear orientation toward persons in the PSP--students as persons, teachers as persons, and the importance of positive relationships and interactions among persons. PSP strategies included processes to develop a sense of self and a sense of community, and to some extent also this was a focus of programmatic attention.

Curriculum of affect. You can have an individually paced program that takes little account of personal interests and culture; and you can have a program that focuses strongly on persons without its being individually paced. Nasca's finding that the social studies program was not individualized highlights the distinction between individualization practices (learning cycle, learning modes, etc.) and personalized education. Material on the development of social studies in PSP suggests some deliberate attention to a curriculum of affect. Prior to PSP, social studies teaching leaned heavily on the adoption of County-wide texts and large group teaching. By Year 2, when a social studies coordinator was available in PSP, the emphasis had shifted strongly to social studies as a vehicle for value clarification and thinking skills, with applications to personal and social decision-making--students taking responsibility for their own behavior and decisions and interacting successfully in small groups. "The emphasis," said the coordinator, "is more on personalizing than on the technical meaning associated with individualizing instruction" (Res. Coord., 6-74). Thus the State-adopted series of Macmillan textbooks and packages used at elementary level were strongly supported by programs bought with County monies through the Drug Education Program. DUSO--Developing Understanding of Self and Others--was selected by the coordinator because of its emphasis on positive self-image and interdisciplinary approach. The activity-oriented program, it was claimed, was not dependent upon reading skills; hence no need to group students according to reading skills.

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*Before the State revision of requirements, the program was well accepted and workshops were run for other high schools where interest had been expressed in the Greer High program.

Building community. Many of the features of the PSP instructional environment contributed to building "community" and relationships: the open and flexible space; varied groupings for tasks and instruction; multi-aged, multi-graded grouping; differentiated staffing and teaming; mainstreaming of handicapped students. These may be seen as ways of reducing the barriers between people different in age, status and capacity, and increasing their sense of community.

Because of facility layout and community resistance, the reorganizations of staff attempted in the first two years of PSP did not result in viable space-sharing communities in High School. The school used other means to achieve community identification. Beyond the traditional social activities and projects, community was strengthened by innovative practices--particularly multi-aging/multi-grading within the short-course structure, and the advisee system. Most courses were open to all regardless of age, save in some areas of sequenced instruction (e.g., in foreign language). Most teachers became, instead of homeroom teachers, advisors to a group of 20-25 students assigned by the students' own choice rather than by grade.* Aside from requests for change, students kept the same advisors throughout their years at High School. Within this structure students had the possibility of knowing and becoming known by an adult responsible for working with him/her on study program and personal development, and for maintaining home-school communication, over several years. Within this structure, too, students had increased opportunity to know and be known by students younger and older and otherwise different from themselves**, and to develop a value system that could recognize and appreciate contributions of others to their lives and learning. By the end of the Project, the aspect of PSP in High School which received the most positive support from students, parents, and teachers (per High School surveys) was the advisee system and (by self-report) peer relationships cut across age-grade barriers.

> Peer relationships were based on compatibility of personality rather than on age and grade level. The communication that is so vitally needed in order for society to function adequately was taught through multi-age grouping. The barriers that existed prior to PSP were greatly reduced because of the increased care and concern for others. [PSP Final Report, High School Section]

Whatever the deviation of practice from the ideal recorded in the above self-appraisal, it is judged that development of a sense of community at Greer High created a better living and learning environment than is found in too many high schools today--where students experience few in-school opportunities to develop relationships outside their own age-grade group, and where often a sense of "nobody knows, nobody cares" is engendered by individual schedules that buy some individualization of study programs at the price of sustained relationships within a supportive group.

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*Before leaving Middle School, students viewed a slide-tape presentation on all High School advisors. Each student selected six teachers s/he would like for an advisor and one of these became the student's advisor. The advisor-advisee relationship was maintained throughout the student's years at High School, unless incompatibility developed when a procedure was followed to change the situation.

** For example, the handicapped. PSP schools were the only ones in the County in which "trainables" remained within mainstream schools rather than placed in a special segregated facility. Greer High incorporated "sheltered workshops".

*JUDGMENT: PSP learning communities and schools were more than units created for instructional purposes. They were social communities which facilitated development of persons and of interpersonal relationships. At High School, community identification was established largely through the advisee system and the system of multi-aged/multi-graded short courses.*

Success Orientation. Success Orientation was one of the listed "processes for individualizing education" in PSP and it, too, was intended to promote positive personal dispositions and positive interpersonal relations. During the planning period of PSP, the community involvement process had highlighted concerns of citizens and educators about some negative aspects of the schools. They wanted a reduction in the fear of failure, in boredom, and in the dropout rate. Schools, it was felt, should provide experiences for students and teachers that promote positive attitudes about self, about learning, and positive relationships with other people. "Success Orientation" was responsive to this concern. Student strengths were to be built upon; teachers were to learn ways to help students see progress rather than continual failure; and teachers were to learn how to distinguish between punishment and discipline.

*JUDGMENT: The learning community organization provided a vehicle that helped to promote Success Orientation. Teachers came to know students better, interacting with them in the open settings and having relationships with most students over more than a single year. At High School, the advisee system increased the likelihood that each student was known well by at least one compatible adult over a period of years.*

Prior to and during Year 1, PSP made a heavy investment in Schools Without Failure* training; first for a leadership group from each school, and then in a

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*Based upon the work of William Glasser, who developed a new approach to psychiatry emphasizing personal responsibility for behavior (see Reality Therapy: A New Approach to Psychiatry). In his work, he became increasingly involved with education. The applications of his approaches in schools are developed in his book, Schools Without Failure (New York: Harper & Row, c. 1969). At the time of PSP, Glasser had achieved a solid reputation for his work with children in the Los Angeles City schools--Watts and other areas--and the Palo Alto schools. And he had developed a training program for school personnel. PSP requisition records show that 229 individuals attended three major SWF workshops (directed by the Education Training Center, Los Angeles) in 1972 and 1973.

30-hour seminar for all faculties. Teachers agreed to conduct 30 class meetings with students, and all seminar groups read Schools Without Failure and listened to Glasser's tapes. Teachers who had not participated in the first course (pre-PSP) took it in fall Year 1 while others took an advanced course in reality therapy. The approach heavily emphasizes individuals taking responsibility for their own actions. Hence it stresses the development of self-discipline rather than externally imposed punishments as a positive approach to behavior change.

Given their exposure to Schools Without Failure, it might be expected that PSP teachers would exhibit behaviors consistent with the reality therapy approach: evidence of group or class meetings, isolation of non-productive students followed by student-generated contracts designed to alter behavior in situations mutually defined as non-productive. Informal observation in PSP elementary schools during Years 4 and 5 offered some examples of the latter manner of "working things through" with students. However, during 30 hours of formal observation time in the Year 5 mini-study of elementary learning communities, observers noted no applications of reality therapy. The teachers observed generally used directives to stop undesirable behavior or to redirect behavior into more productive channels--in a soft, pleasant manner at time, but nonetheless directive.

A quite different approach emerged in some schools near the end of Year 3. A resource room designed to train teachers in the use of behavior modification techniques was established in the PSP area office building, and was supplied with an excellent array of self-instructional materials for use by teachers desiring to learn fundamental behavior modification techniques. Unlike the SWF sessions, behavior modification training was not required for all. No sessions were listed on the staff development records, but there were sessions labeled "Behavior Management", "Classroom Management for Teachers" and "Discipline Techniques". Observations did reveal some indication of reward systems consistent with behavior modification, although only one learning community visited had a systematic process of administering positive and negative points to individuals based upon specific behaviors. Although some rudiments of behavior modification principles were visible, application generally seemed to be loose and inconsistent. As we shall note further below, reality therapy and behavior modification derive from quite different premises and point to some problems in harmonizing approaches to instructional and to social behaviors.

> *SUMMARY AND JUDGMENT: (Humanizing and personalizing education). A variety of means were used in PSP to develop a sense of self, to promote positive relationships with others, and to build "community". These means included many features of the new learning environment: open and flexible space; student groupings; student-teacher relations; some elements of a curriculum of affect; and the emphasis on "success orientation".*
>
> *Although some specific techniques (e.g., reality therapy)were not in consistent or widespread use by Year 5, and there were variations across learning communities, we judge that the general interpersonal climate for learning was positive and consistent with PSP goals of humanizing and personalizing education.*

## G. LEARNING COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION: A MARRIAGE OF OPENNESS AND PRESCRIPTION

### Openness and Prescription

Study of PSP intentions and practices in learning communities reveals a paradox. On the one hand, there was flexibility and openness--for example, in physical characteristics of the environment (elementary and middle), in the cross-age/grade grouping for instruction (elementary and high), in community-building, and in staff allegiance to a philosophy of openness. On the other hand, the basic instructional practices associated with major programs adopted were prescriptive and teacher-dominated.

Characteristics of 'open education', a term frequently used in PSP, are only peripherally related to the diagnostic-prescriptive form of individualization. Both open and prescriptive approaches are difficult to implement, but they call for differing skills: one form emphasizes sequentially arranged learning resources and management skills to accommodate different rates of learning; the other emphasizes responsive teacher behaviors and a sophisticated teacher communication pattern. A mixture of the two is perhaps more difficult to achieve than either one, and it is not clear that PSP personnel sorted out the differences between the approaches.

Interview notes (Years 1 and 2) suggest some argument at management level between those who felt the approach to curriculum should "bubble up" from below, so to speak, centering on the child, with particular programs being selected or developed accordingly, and those who felt that the important thing was to accommodate individual learning rates and that PSP should move quickly to get its programs going with the best of what was on the market. Some program managers complained about lack of flexibility to choose programs and felt that purchase of commercially available programs was pushed by eager resource coordinators rather than emerging from careful examination of alternatives by school staff.*

Teacher-student communication patterns associated with major academic programs were not consonant with the kinds of interactions advocated in the reality therapy/Schools Without Failure approach to dealing with student behavior. The senior investigator for the study of learning communities made these summative comments:

> Both reality therapy and open education may have flourished to some extent in some learning communities in certain time periods, but it is unlikely that either would survive without a fully clarified awareness of the implications inherent in d-p individualization. Although "Schools Without Failure" emphasizes effective social relationships while d-p individualization focuses on academic behavior, it is extremely difficult to maintain one communication pattern for academic tasks and another for social behavior. There can be little doubt that teachers experienced many a frustrating moment attempting to implement an ill-defined form of individualization, constrained by existing curricular mandates as well as an overriding IGE influence, and at the same time attempting to initiate a communication pattern based on student decision-making. Moreover, in schools reputed to have serious "discipline problems"--particularly the Middle School--there were clear efforts by administration and teachers to "crack down" on discipline and to establish more staff-dominated control...

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*Hence strong PSP advice derived from this experience: Develop participative decision-making processes first: people before programs (see Chapter 8).

> ...Our observations support the conclusion that teacher-student interaction patterns in the PSP generally follow the model established for curricular control. Teachers have the curriculum and transmit it to students. Teachers have also established standards for behavior and use their authority to transmit these standards to students. At the elementary level this process works without too many problems and is associated with a generally pleasant instructional environment. In the Middle School, however, the pattern of teacher authority often fails to provide a pleasant, comfortable environment.*

While these tensions identified in the marriage of openness and prescription in PSP practices were apparent to some staff some of the time, there was apparently no general awareness and no direct confrontation of the issues involved. Yet marriage there was--achieved by accommodations on both sides: less openness than in child-centered "open education"; more openness than in teacher-dominated, age-graded, "closed" environments of traditional schooling.

## Teacher Beliefs and Instructional Practices

We have already noted the way in which County curricular mandates conditioned the marriage of choice and prescription, freedom and control in PSP. It is important also to understand that prevailing norms in the community at large heavily favored a staff-directed instructional environment. Parental and community concerns about discipline, student behavior, teachers making decisions, etc. both supported and exerted pressure for a strong sense of teachers being "in control" (see Chapter 6, below). Data from the Educational Beliefs Scale and the Walberg-Thomas Scale of Openness suggest that PSP teachers in the aggregate, tended to be disposed in this direction also.**

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*Don Nasca (principal investigator for the learning community study) June, 1977.

**Walberg-Thomas (slightly modified for PSP High School) was administered in classroom observation five times (spring Year 2, fall and spring Year 3, fall and spring Year 4), and in questionnaire format three times (spring of Years 2, 3, and 4). The Educational Beliefs Scale was included in the Teacher Survey for four years (spring of Years 1, 2, 3, 4). Having judged that degree of openness had stablized, we dropped these components from Year 5 investigation in favor of closer observation of selected learning communities, and survey questions on teaming practices, staff development and phasing out of PSP.

The Walberg-Thomas Scale of Openness was included in systematic classroom observations and also in questionnaire format (teacher self-reports) in Years 2, 3, and 4. The instrument assesses relative openness in classroom practices (actual and perceived) with regard to individualization, student freedom, curriculum and testing, and materials organization (for each of which there is a distinct sub-scale). Scores may be interpreted to classify teachers as being very open, moderately open, moderately traditional, or traditional. Highest scores are possible only if students are given opportunities to make their own decisions about use of time, space, grouping, and learning resources (as well as there being appropriate provisioning in the physical environment). Lowest scores reflect teachers operating predominantly in a lecture mode.

*FINDINGS (Walberg-Thomas Scale of Openness, Years 2-4):*

- *Staffs of all elementary schools clustered within the category "moderately open", with small variations up or down within that category across schools and over time. Staff of Middle School and High School were rated towards the upper end of "moderately traditional" in classroom practices.* [Based on five observation periods, Years 2, 3, 4]*
- *Teachers viewed themselves as being more open than observers did, observer and self-reports being closest for elementary schools. Middle School and High School teachers viewed themselves as being slightly more open than elementary and considerably more open than trained observers gave them credit for. [Based on teacher self-reports, Years 2, 3, 4]*

The Educational Beliefs Scale (EBS) assesses teacher attitudes as more or less open or traditional in the areas of student participation, discipline and control and instructional objectives (for each of which there is a sub-scale). The instrument was included in the Teacher Questionnaire in Years 1, 2, 3, and 4. The most marked feature of the data is the consistency over time and across levels of schooling.

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*The same general pattern holds within each sub-scale of more openness in elementary than in middle and high schools, but the distinction is somewhat less than for the total scores.

*FINDING (Educational Beliefs Scale, Years 1-4): PSP teacher attitudes, as assessed by the EBS, were highly consistent over time and across levels of schooling. They confirm a judgment of "moderate openness", tending towards the innovative in regard to instructional objectives but more towards the traditional in regard to discipline and control and student participation.*

For EBS, as with Walberg-Thomas, there were no pre-PSP data with which to compare the scores (and no Walberg-Thomas data until Year 3). However, data from an I/D/E/A study of 49 schools engaged in educational innovation in western states, circa 1971, allow some comparison. PSP scores on the Educational Beliefs sub-scales were closer to the more traditional (non-teaming) classrooms in the I/D/E/A study in the areas of 'student participation' and 'discipline and control', and closer to the more innovative schools in the area of 'instructional objectives'.*

Finally, we note findings from two other components of systematic classroom observation, indicators that support the judgment of "moderate openness"; the Student Activity Index and the Student-Teacher Interaction Index.

The use of small homogeneous groupings prevalent in PSP suggests more student-teacher interaction, but does not necessarily imply a variety of student activities occurring simultaneously--more student autonomy. Variety increases as individual students are observed working on their own projects and decreases as group size increases. The Student Activity Index is an indicator of this variety.

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*See Support Materials, Table EBS-1. Judgments are based on data from subscales of the Educational Beliefs Scale incorporated in Teacher Surveys in spring of Years 1, 2, 3, and 4 of PSP, compared with I/D/E/A data for 1971-72 on the same instrument for 49 schools. There was some variation across PSP schools. We do not have EBS data for pre-PSP or for comparison with teachers in traditional (non-innovating) schools elsewhere.

*FINDING: Student activity ratios indicate: (a) moderate to low variety in student activities occurring simulataneously; (b) lower scores in Middle and High Schools than in elementary, reflecting group size; and (c) greater variety of activity in spring than fall, particularly in elementary schools. [Systematic observations, fall and spring Year 4, fall Year 5]*

A second indicator is furnished by the Teacher-Student Interactions Index. In a ranking task in which teachers in elementary schools and Middle School were asked to group 17 characteristics of learning communities according to importance, the teachers all assigned a "very high" ranking to "constant two-way flow of communication between teachers and students", affirming allegiance to the PSP philosophy of openness. Systematic classroom observation cycles included an index to indicate whether the flow of communication was teacher-dominated or two-way between teachers and students.

*FINDING: The direction of verbal communication tended to be more teacher-dominated in all schools--more so in High than in elementary schools and Middle School. There was a tendency toward slight increase in two-way communication from fall to spring. [Systematic observations, fall and spring Year 4, fall Year 5]*

Non-verbal communication patterns were not systematically documented. However, informal observation suggested a considerable amount of touching, smiling, etc. behaviors, particularly at elementary level. Casual observation also supports the judgment that children showed more ease in approaching and relating to adults than in traditional settings--a facility ascribed by staff and observers to daily exposure to a variety of adults (teachers, "paras", aides, visitors, observers...) in the open community environment.

There were periodic variations in the patterns suggested by these student-related findings, but the general picture holds. The greater activity variation and the increase in student-initiated communication in spring as compared with fall observations was explained as a function of teachers getting to know students and getting them accustomed to a routine that allowed more variety of student choice as the year progressed. In fall of Year 5, there was a marked drop in observed openness across all schools (Walberg-Thomas scores). Conversation with staff revealed a renewed concern with discipline and an emphasis on external control of student behavior.

*JUDGMENT: Teacher practices in PSP schools can be fairly depicted as "moderately open" (use adoption), their self-perceived practices as "open" (symbolic adoption), and their beliefs (EBS) as open with regard to instructional objectives and tending to be more traditional with regard to discipline and control, and student participation or autonomy. Practices were more open at elementary than at secondary levels of schooling.*

## Stabilization and Continuity

Stabilization. Having reviewed the nature and effects of various aspects of learning communities--their physical, instructional, staffing and student-related characteristics--we reaffirm at this point the general statements made at the beginning of the chapter. During the period of the Piedmont Schools Project a new instructional environment was created, at the heart of which was the concept of learning communities. *As part of the development of learning communities, we find that:*

- *The physical environment of most Project schools was changed, becoming more open in structure and flexible in use. (Section B)*
- *Staffing patterns and relationships were changed, involving some differentiation of functions, teaming of teachers, sharing of programmatic decision-making*, and changes in instructional practice (Sections D, E, G).*
- *Student opportunities and relationship were changed, particularly through patterns created by multi aging/grading, various instructional groupings, mainstreaming, and individualization of instruction (Sections C and F)*
- *Individualization and personalization of education were achieved in varying degrees, through programs and processes, including attention to learning modes, learning cycle, success orientation, and positive relationships among adult and student members of learning communities. (Section F).*

This is the broad, general picture. Discussion throughout this chapter has suggested some of the nuances of meanings and the variability in implementation of the different components across time and across schools, particularly between levels of schooling.**

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*Redistribution of programmatic authority and participative decision-making are discussed in Chapter 5, below.

**Differences across elementary schools at the general level of discussion of this chapter tended to be relatively small. But this masks some differences among schools. Taken singly, indicators of implementation do not make a persuasive case for inter- and intra-school differences; taken together, they cluster in ways that do suggest differences. But that is subject matter for a more detailed comparative education study than can be undertaken here.

There were no generally comparable data from classroom observations for the period before PSP or for the first half of the Project. However, review of available documentation for the early period, plus data from questionnaires, plus systematic observations and interviews in Years 4 and 5, support the conclusion (summarized by reference to "opennness" in environment and practices) that characteristics of learning communities stabilized in PSP schools by mid-way through the Project.

> *JUDGMENTS: Physical changes were largely made by Year 1 start-up, with flexibility of use increasing in the early period. Symbolic adoption of new practices stabilized around the end of Year 2. Actual implementation practices appear to have stabilized around the end of Year 3. In elementary schools stabilization occurred at moderately open levels, and in Middle School and High School at somewhat less open levels.*
>
> *The innovation represented by "learning communities" and the depicted extent of openness in setting and practices, were achieved within an overall context of an external community which was traditional and conservain orientation, particularly with regard to discipline and control.*

Stabilization does not imply stasis or stagnation. Far from it. PSP staff continued to develop skills and capabilities, programs and processes; and it took considerable time for staff to feel that they could "get it all together". There were staff changes to cope with, and shifts in the political and economic scene in the County. But the basic patterns of inovation by level of schooling were in place by mid-way through the Project.

Continuity. Problems in the first years of implementing learning communities focused largely upon "how to do it". By Year 5, concerns focused on "how to maintain it" with reduced availability of personnel and equipment once special Federal funding ceased and it became apparent that the District would not be "picking up the tab" for paraprofessionals or even for less expensive items such as the xerox machine at High School, which teachers prized as a way of producing individualized materials. Again, interview records convey the range of considerations, feelings, and intentions involved with regard to continuity, and which are somewhat inadequately but briefly encapsuled in the following judgment.*

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* "Phasing Out" considerations are discussed in Chapter 7, below.

*JUDGMENT: Learning communities would continue to be the heart of the instructional environment of former PSP-schools after the Project, but with modification to take account of contextual factors.*

*On the negative side, financial constraints in the District would preclude the allocation of local resources to PSP schools to maintain extra personnel--notably paraprofessionals. This would reduce the extent of individualization by necessitating increased group size and decreased numbers of small groups at elementary level; and by cutting some of the supports of the short-course system at High school (e.g. paperback books, xerox machine). The "Back to Basics" movement would put a premium on demonstrating that "basics" can be taught and learned in open environments as well as if not better than in traditional.*

*On the positive side, the knowledge, skills and dispositions developed in teachers to promote individualized and personalized education would remain, as would major aspects of plant and equipment. Commitment was strong at area management level, and the general tenor of staff comments was: "We can keep individualizing but not to the same extent as before, and we can keep our general philosophy and climate of openness."*

The investment in people--their opportunities to learn, to practice, to institutionalize changed behaviors and create a new learning environment--was critical. The staff development process was at the heart of this investment in people. To this we now turn.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### A. INTENTIONS

General intentions of PSP concerning staff characteristics, recruitment, and training are expressed in the Letter of Interest to USOE, 1971, and in the PSP Proposal/Plan of March 1972. The Letter of Interest included these statements:

> The teachers will become learning facilitators. This will be a new role for them and it is expected that this change will be difficult. Extensive in-service training in motivation, self-concept building, value clarification, rapport building, conflict management, goal setting, writing behavioral objectives, and developing real-world evaluative instruments will be necessary on a continuing basis throughout the duration of the project.
>
> A full-time teacher will be hired to facilitate the process of changing teacher behaviors through a two-phase model. Phase One would be devoted to helping each teacher to enhance his own self-concept. Phase Two would emphasize the means by which the teacher will transmit the realities of achievement motivation to each student.
>
> The learning facilitator would work with individuals and small groups of children.... The teachers will become learners.... There will be constant reflecting back to the aims and goals of education....
>
> Accountability will be practiced throughout the program. The administrator will hold the teachers accountable for practicing the life style that builds positive self-concept in others....

The heavy emphasis upon affective/humanistic education was elaborated in statements of general goals for the project ("...Affective education is valued as highly as the cognitive domain in the Piedmont Experimental School..."). And there were references to specific sources of activities and curricula which would be used (e.g., "The philosophy that is found in William Glasser's book, Schools Without Failure, will be implemented in all the Piedmont

Experimental Schools...)*. By the time the official version of the PSP Plan/Proposal was produced (March 1972), all references to specific sources of information, concepts and activities were removed (in response, said PSP staff, to requests from the Federal agency), but the general humanistic thrust remained. The shift in curricular emphasis and the organizational changes explicit and implicit in the submission gave weight to the simple phrase, "... it is expected that this change [in roles] will be difficult...."

## Leadership in Staff Development

Clearly the many new roles and role changes envisioned by the Project would place heavy demands on staff development to build the knowledge, skills and motivations to implement the comprehensive innovation. Achieving clarity about what the SD needs were, who would be responsible for leadership to meet them, and how they would be met--these were matters of high priority if the project was to meet its goals.

As to who would provide leadership, the key position was the Manager of Staff Support Services, whose functions are described in the PSP Plan thus:

> *The Manager of Staff Support Services* will supply outside consultants to challenge inside perspectives, provide public relations and communications, coordinate the in-service training programs, chair the Curriculum Steering Committee, maintain regular contact with Evaluation Specialists. In general, he provides support to those in the instructional phase of the Piedmont Experimental Schools Project.**

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*See GCSD, Letter of Interest, May 1971, pp. 8-9. There is reference specifically to activities developed by the Human Development Training Institute, Achievement Motivation Processes, Humanistic Center for Education at the University of Massachusetts, and Self-Enhancing Education, as well as to the work of William Glasser.

**PSP Plan, March 1972, pp. 25-26.

But the responsibility for leadership in change and developing staff capabilities was spread widely among project staff:

> Under the Piedmont Schools administrative structure, the role of Executive Director and his staff must be that of change agents, helping staff groups develop and test educational models. Constructive change is the required outcome, and all administrators will work to facilitate the following goals:
>
> 1. To help teachers in the development of programs dealing with particular age spans and special needs of children. Teachers have an important constructive role in the new model. They will be assisted to function confidently and securely in the change.
>
> 2. To help all Piedmont Schools personnel to recognize that institutional change is predictable and can be managed and that all personnel share the responsibility for developing ways to manage change. The idea goes far beyond merely changing techniques. It begins with an understanding of how people learn, and includes a knowledge of what supports teachers adapting to the institution. It also emphasizes problem solving and technical support.*

Position descriptions for the *Executive Director,* the *Manager of School Programs, Program Managers,* the *Evaluation Specialists* all included functions implicitly or explicitly involving staff development. *Resource Coordinators* were, among other things, to "help teachers develop their competencies in individualizing instruction", to "spend at least 50 percent of their time working with children and teachers in the various Learning Communities" and to "identify and help arrange in-service training programs". In each school, learning community coordinators' responsibilities would include "...the development and implementation of in-service teacher education for the learning community." (p. 33)

The *Furman University/PSP liaison personnel* (two were intended, one at elementary and one at secondary level, jointly funded by PSP and Furman U.) had an important role in the staff development strategy. In addition to other functions*, they were to aid staff in implementing "the school organizational model and the individualized instructional approach"; they were to render "constant assistance to teachers as more stress is placed on the affective dimension of the teaching process"; and they were to provide "a resource to the current literature as related research and articles are called to the attention of staff." (Plan, pp. 46-47)

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*PSP Plan, March 1972, pp. 25-26.

## Desired Characteristics of PSP Teachers

In keeping with the humanistic philosophy of PSP, the Plan's statements as staff selection become most specific when detailing the personal attributes of the ideal PSP teacher.

> The key to successful implementation of the Piedmont Plan philosophy, organization and program is the teacher. The in-service tasks will revolve around the changing role of the teacher--moving into the teacher/advisor role and becoming facilitators of the instruction. The project needs qualified, committed, enthusiastic, and flexible teachers.

The Plan specifies the "ideal characteristics" of the PSP teacher thus:

1. He *is open and free*. Because of his affirmative attitude, he exercises great freedom and openness. He lives and works in an atmosphere of optimism and hope.

2. He *has clearly defined goals*. He is constantly clarifying his own values and goals and helps students to do the same.

3. He *accepts the diverse values and beliefs of others.* He makes no attempt to fit students into molds; he encourages growth, innovation, creativity, self-expression, and independence.

4. He *plays a supporting role*. Neither controller nor manipulator, neither judge nor censor, he encourages each student to grow at maximum speed in his own way.

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*Six functions are listed in the Plan. One involved working with Furman faculty and administration to bring total university resources to bear on PSP. Two others emphasized maintaining involvement of pre-service teachers in the PSP. The remaining three had clear inferences for leadership in staff development within PSP.

5. He *is excited about teaching* and *is committed to and competent in his job.* Having seen (and shared in) the process of learning and growth, he is eager to continue to develop his own potential.

6. He *is dedicated to the discovery and development of unrealized potential.* He searches for the hidden strengths and talents in his students, and takes positive action toward creation of a climate of growth for these assets.

7. He *is committed to students as individuals.* He is able to see the world through the student's eyes and to encourage individual growth based on the student's unique potential.

8. He *encourages openness in others.* He understands and accepts his colleagues and students as they are, where they are, providing them a model for growth.

9. He *creatively manages conflicts and problems.* He approaches problems with openness, with little anxiety, and with much positive enthusiasm. He listens well, communicates well, has team spirit, and yet can work alone.

10. He *has a strong, expanding sense of personal strength.* He knows his potential and works to actualize it. He is willing to take risks in the classroom.

Although not specified, the same attributes were probably considered "ideal" for administrative personnel, too.

## Initial "Selection" of School Staff

Guidelines. The process for selecting staff for the project incorporated nine guidelines, the first of them emphasizing that everything--organization, training, staffing and program--was to be based on "educating students...and not...the convenience and ease of the adults implementing the philosophy and program". Personnel had to be volunteers and participate in an "individualized in-service training program".

> The most qualified people--those who accept and embody the philosophy of the program, attempt to implement it with students and parents, and exhibit by their behavior the desired characteristics--will be selected for the program.

The selection process was to be participatory--the Executive Director by the end of the school year before PSP (spring 1972) would identify personnel, taking into account recommendations of Program Managers, supervisors, district directors, fellow teachers, teachers of in-service courses, personal interviews, the district personnel office, and available recommendations of students and parents.

Priority would be given first to those already assigned to Greer schools, second to those teaching in the school district--provided that the teachers in each case met the specified criteria. Beyond that, "qualified people" from inside and outside the district were to be "sought and encouraged to volunteer for the project." All those selected were to make a commitment to PSP, "to state their desire to participate in the program and pledge the support, time, and effort deemed necessary to make the project successful."

## School Personnel at the Start of PSP

> *JUDGMENT: PSP planners exerted considerable effort to identify roles and personal characteristics of staff for the project, and to generate a broad selection process. The elaboration of requirements did serve to specify commitments to PSP. But in practice, there were constraints on the selection process which increased the challenge for staff development.*

The vast majority of building personnel were not specially selected for the project. The eight schools did not self-select themselves into the Experimental Schools Program; they were identified by the District for that purpose. "Selecting" teachers and program managers was less a matter of choosing freely among potential candidates than of requiring those people who already staffed the schools to make a commitment to PSP. The "volunteer" system operated not so much to have people opt to be in the project (though many teachers inside and outside Greer schools were interested) as it did to allow those already in place to opt out with impunity; they were free to transfer to a non-project school in the district without prejudice of position. Few took that option. Thus, whatever gap there might be between ideal and actual dispositions, skills, etc. of staff as the project began would have to be narrowed through staff development.

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## Intended Characteristics of PSP Staff Development

> The in-service program is designed to help teachers develop, choose, and test alternatives that will reach the project objectives. To help the staff determine how to satisfy the educational aspirations of the community, in-service education is one part of a total educational endeavor and, as such, should never be viewed as a panacea or an end in itself. (PSP Plan, 1972)

This statement suggests the first characteristic of PSP staff development: integration in the total educational endeavor. Such integration implies that staff development is more than what is implied in conventional views of "in-service activities"--an understanding which was lived out in PSP but not explicated or documented in early planning and implementation. For our purposes, we take "in-service" to be the formal programmed part of the continuing education of PSP staff, and "staff development" as the continuing overall educational process, formal and informal, that would foster the characteristics and competencies sought in project personnel.

A second intended characteristic of the PSP staff development was that it would be based on trust and long exposure:

> Before any meaningful change can take place, genuine trust must exist between the trainers and the rest of the staff. This cannot be nurtured in one-shot, information-giving workshops which have been used frequently in the past. The in-service trainers must gain the trust and confidence of the teaching staff through long exposure. (p. 87)

Third, effective staff development would call for individualization of in-service. Planners spoke of the need to work with individual teachers, learning communities, building staff, groups from several buildings, and with specialists and administrators--much as they understood that work with students would involve four learning modes or aggregations of learners. "In-service training must provide individualized learning experiences for the teachers if they are to facilitate the individual student's learning." The needs of individual teachers could be observed and met as they arose because it was intended that in-service take place within a learning community format.

Fourth, there would be participatory planning of in-service involving design "by those in need of the training--the teacher and administrator", and this participatory process would operate throughout the life of the project and be "the key to effective in-service training". The Plan itself derived in some measure from such cooperative planning. During the developmental period of PSP (March-August 1972) ten current professionals, including teachers, administrators, and supervisors were released full time to serve as a liaison between the central planning group and the schools. Among other tasks they helped "develop the detailed in-service plans from the practitioner's point of view".

## E. IMPLEMENTATION: EVOLUTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN PSP

Did PSP staff development as it was implemented have the above characteristics? And was it effective? The broad answer is largely positive.

### *OVERALL SUMMARY JUDGMENTS*

> *The PSP implemented a staff development process which, in general, had the planned characteristics of integration into project life, individualization, continuity of exposure, and participatory planning. The quality of these characteristics varied over time. Nevertheless, staff development was a pervasive force in the project, translated through formal activities and less formal relationships and follow-through among staff.*
>
> *The process focused heavily upon teachers, was weakest at the level of building administrators and quasi-non-existent at other staffing levels. The overall thrust and strategy presaged in the Plan were seriously weakened by the elimination of the specific leadership position for Staff Support Services at the end of Year 1, a situation that began to be remedied only in Year 4.*
>
> *The Staff Development process evolved over the life of PSP and, though it varied in strength over time and in quality across schools, overall it did provide crucial support for innovation and was highly acclaimed by staff.*

Some discussion of the evolution of "in-service" in PSP will illustrate the nature of formal attention to staff development.

The most intensive in-service sessions occurred during the summers preceding each year of the project (summer 1972 through summer 1976). In the first (pre-PSP) summer there were mandatory project-wide workshops of 6-8 weeks. Thereafter a variety of 4-6 week project-related offerings occurred each summer, but these were optional for most PSP staff; and additionally there were 1-2 week school-specific workshops which were mandatory*. Workshops were offered separately by level of schooling - elementary, middle, high.

Despite awareness of the need for staff development to be built up on trust over a long period of time, the program outlined and implemented for March-August 1972 suggests heavy pressure to develop major competencies during the brief developmental period:

> The philosophy and programs of the Piedmont Experimental Schools Project to be implemented in September 1972, mandate that specific teacher competencies exist or be acquired during the developmental period of the project. The philosophy of the Learning Community Model to be implemented dictates that the staff engage in certain common experiences. Other skills or competencies must be gained or be judged to exist. (p. 88)

The evolution of Project-wide activities shows some shifts in strategy and in leadership coordination for in-service activities. Pre-PSP and Year 1 there was strong leadership from the Manager of Staff Support Services. In Years 2 and 3 that position was dropped; the incumbent left the project, and the functions of leadership in Staff Development devolved upon an overloaded Manager of School Programs. In Years 4 and 5 there were two different coordinators of Staff Development and concomitant changes in strategy.

Year 1. The general goals of pre-project workshops were: (1) developing competencies or gaining the skills and knowledge required to implement the Piedmont Schools Project, and (2) developing rapport with self and others in the learning community and the school**.

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*See Support Materials: Table SDA-1.

**See PSP, Continuation Application, p. 200, for a review of activities in Years 1 and 2.

The heaviest emphasis was on the range of concepts incorporated in PSP innovation, particularly general classroom organization and management processes, with much attention to the IGEWisconsin Model and Glasser's Reality Therapy Model.

Year 2. The theme of the non-mandatory project-wide workshop in summer 1973 (preceding Year 2) was "Individual Needs". Again the majority of topics related to particular components and concepts associated with PSP innovation--presumably to orient teachers new to the project (philosophy; role groups; processes and instructional techniques, such as open classrooms, multi-age grouping; curricular packages and programs; student assessment; behavior modification; learning theory; mainstreaming; out-of-school learning, etc.). As in Year 1 there were some workshops focused on particular curricular areas (e.g., developing games and activities in math and language arts).

In the summer preceding Year 3 (1974) there emerged a totally different approach. Project-wide sponsored staff development was offered in the form of tuition-free attendance for 125 PSP staff in 13 courses offered at Furman University. Years 4 and 5 were preceded (summers 1975 and 1976) by a Summer Demonstration School--which offered the most integrated approach to experiential learning of PSP concepts and processes. A large number of PSP personnel served as teachers in the demonstration schools. Each demonstration school was accompanied by a Furman University practicum that offered up to twenty consultant presentations in a variety of topics associated with learning community development. Although consultants were still being drawn from outside PSP, there was a definite trend toward increased use of PSP staff in workshop presentations.

In Year 5 (June 1, 1976 - May 30, 1977) there was by far the most thoroughly documented staff development*. For the first time, staff development was coordinated by a Staff Development Committee with faculty representation from each school. The committee based its selection of activities on a questionnaire administered to all staff and continual dialogue within each school. A monthly agenda of staff development activities was presented to program managers for approval prior to being published and distributed each month. These staff development announcements prepared during the final project year represented the most sophisticated communication system of the entire five-year period.

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*The new (Year 5) Executive Director of PSP was "a real stickler for details" and was primarily responsible for requiring more rigorous documentation than characterized the prior period.

Examination of the 116 PSP-sponsored staff development activities offered in Year 5 shows continued interest in the general areas of classroom management, IGE workshops and "We Agree" sessions, and the emergence of attention to Language Experience Approaches to reading, Transactional Analysis (four sessions), Relaxation Training and Values Clarification--the last three representing continuing concern with developing open communication and independent learners.*

Over the last four years of the project, while participation in project-wide activities was optional, there were mandatory one/two week school workshops prior to school opening, with emphases tailored to the needs of particular situations and personnel.**

Analyses of workshop listings*** and interviews with PSP staff (in Year 4 and Year 5) support the following findings:

> *FINDINGS: The evolution of formal staff development activities over the five years of the PSP shows these trends:*
>
> *a. From broad orientation and concepts...*
> *To specific applications*

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*The new titles occasionally offered by the same experts who presented Reality Therapy and Schools Without Failure sessions, emerge from Adlerian precepts and are viewed as humanistic approaches to teaching-learning. (Nasca)

**See PSP Continuation Application (1975) for school-by-school statements about in-service, circa Years 2 and 3.

***Listings were reconstructed for the five-year period by Nasca, there being no systematic historic record available in PSP as of early Year 4. See Support Materials, Tables SDA-1 and SDA-2 for summary of project-wide activities.

b. *From heavy use of project office and external locales...*
   *To locating activities in schools and inside learning communities*

c. *From external initiation of topics...*
   *To in-school initiation of topics*

d. *From externally hired presenters and PSP consultants...*
   *To use of project-level and school personnel within and beyond the PSP area*

e. *From loosely planned and coordinated Staff Development (Year 2 and Year 3) after an initially strong start (Year 1)...*
   *To strongly coordinated and managed Staff Development with effective participatory planning mechanisms across schools (increasing Year 4 and Year 5)*

As to the substantive shift noted (a), analysis of workshop titles shows that an estimated 70 percent of the Year 5 workshops focused on specific applications (e.g., Scientific Field Trips, Language Experience in Reading...) compared with 27 percent in Year 1. For shift in activity leadership (d), in Year 5, 39 of 116 PSP workshops were offered by PSP staff members (17 by classroom teachers, 20 by resource coordinators, 2 by program managers) as compared with a total of 11 prior to June of Year 4. The Summer Demonstration Schools pre-Year 4 and Pre-Year 5 were staffed by PSP personnel.

Though less easy to document, it is judged that there was a decline over time in attention to strong motivational ("psyching-up") efforts and some slippage in assuring that new staff were thoroughly oriented to basic PSP philosophy, processes and programs as a comprehensive innovation. Thus, a few interviewees with experience at Middle School, for example, mentioned lack of commitment to innovative approaches among some teachers. "The biggest weakness is the assumption that training will modify teacher behavior. We do not have enough staff committed to the ideas of teaming and individualizing..." (Teacher, Year 4) and there were references to inadequate orientation for new teachers. "The key to success of PSP is teacher attitudes", said another who advocated "a repeat of the Banquet of '72 to establish renewed faith and trust in the project, and a valuing of personal commitments." (Teacher, Year 4). Along the same line, some program managers interviewed in Year 5 regretted that there had not been more "psyching-up" activities during this project--opportunities such as the end-of-project "retreat" (for project-level staff and program managers) to bolster their relationships and support them generally as they implemented PSP.

## C. EFFECTIVENESS: GENERAL

### Some General Judgments

> *JUDGMENT: Staff development activities were more effective for teachers than for any other staff category.*

The heavy weight of staff development activities (SDA's) was for teachers. There is little to indicate careful planning for the developmental needs of administrators and support staff. At the lower level of the totem pole, paraprofessionals did receive training opportunities--in the case of related arts personnel, largely through specific activities and continued support from the appropriate resource coordinators; in the case of instructional paras, from other sources, including teachers. The general picture at the administrative levels is that program managers had much the same opportunities for in-service as teachers, but little that was tailored to their needs. Project level administrators and support staff had apparently no attention focused in deliberate, planned fashion on their staff development and support needs. Aside from opportunities in some cases for participation in conferences or workshops outside PSP, the assumption seems to have been that they had all the expertise and motivation and support they needed. The role clarification activities associated with conflict between resource coordinators and program managers early in the project, are among the few documented formal SDA's focusing on needs of administrative and support personnel.

> *FINDING: A broad variety of assistance was offered in the areas of learning community organization and individualization. Very little was offered in the areas of decision-making, evaluation, or community involvement.**

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*Support Materials, Table SDA-2.

Although interviews and workshop analyses showed that such areas as decision-making, evaluation, and community involvement were not well served by staff development, staff interviewed in the schools noted that there were few if any expectations established by PSP for which staff development activities had not been provided. Interviewers gained the impression that the presence of explicitly defined staff development support established the expectations. Those areas defined in the PSP Proposal and Continuation Document were given less credence by classroom personnel than the priorities apparent in actual staff development activities.

Within the area of individualization, for which many SDA's were scheduled, the greatest weight was put on program areas with specifically assigned resource coordinators. Recall that individualization PSP-style was largely diagnostic-prescriptive. Effectiveness of this type of individualization is a function of (a) the availability of materials appropriate to varying rates of learning, and (b) a management system designed to keep track of 25 or more individuals, each of whom may be proceeding at a different rate. In addition, it was judged by the investigator (Nasca) that personnel variables were important, viz: (c) personal commitment/motivation of teachers, and (d) the adequacy of support staff--in particular, the availability of a resource coordinator willing and able to provide follow-through assistance to teachers in the learning communities. Evaluator notes indicate that available materials for individualizing science and social studies--where there was no coordinator to furnish supportive on-site development--were left unused in many communities. In contrast, the most applauded staff follow-on support was in reading and math where there were specifically assigned resource coordinators throughout the duration of PSP.

> *JUDGMENT: Staff development was most effective in changing practices when sustained over time and followed through from formal activity to specific support in classroom settings.*

Specific assistance in a model situation (meaning inside the practical teaching setting) was valued more highly, and judged to be more effective in changing behaviors than presentations on general classroom practices. Asked in Year 4 what they wanted less or more of in staff development, teachers interviewed generally indicated: less theory, more practice; less generalization, more specificity. Typically: "We've had enough philosophy and generalities. What we really need is specific details on the nitty-gritty management skills." Specific suggestions included the listing of more alternatives for teachers in SDAs so they could find something relevant on prescribed in-service days, and follow-through in individual learning communities/classrooms after general presentations.

The favorable comments on staff development in reading and math were associated with this practical follow-through inside learning communities. Interviews with the two resource coordinators revealed that they shared a philosophy and operational style. Both agreed that disseminating information has limited value and that the surest way to promote change is through working directly with teachers in the learning community. Both viewed a coordinated set of materials and implementation of a management system as critically important in building an individualized (D-P) program. Both believed that the best way to help teachers acquire skills in these areas is to assist them directly through participatory training sessions and classroom demonstrations.

Availability of persons such as resource coordinators is a necessary but not sufficient condition for this type of follow-through individualized assistance within a learning community setting. In Years 2 and 3, for example, there were complaints from some schools (shared to some extent by coordinators) that the intended 50 percent of coordinator time was not being spent in the schools. Their patterns of time utilization were skewed by pressures to produce position papers on curriculum and to help in the massive effort involved in preparing the Continuation Application so that refunding would be assured. Thus, it is not the availability of resources (specialist helpers) in itself, but rather the patterns of resource utilization that are associated with effective staff development. We are not saying that the priorities set were necessarily inappropriate in PSP circumstances; we are affirming that

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*Other comments proffered were more person- than process-oriented: e.g., "I was already into that process" or "I teach in five different classrooms and I cannot carry learning centers with me." (Nasca field notes) *time on task in staff development, as in other areas, is a major correlate of effectiveness.*

Finally, in this litany of general statements about what is effective in staff development, we note that *effective staff development takes time.* It takes time, not just in the sense of resources (person-time allocated to task), but in the sense of the duration needed to move from awareness of new practices to their institutionalization in use through the behaviors of teachers in their community setting. Staff members who had been with the project since the beginning all recalled the first summer. Recollections were commonly offered as: "Too much all at once.", and "We sure received a taste of everything that PSP was designed to accomplish." They judged that the initial workshop was crucial in getting the project started but agreed that it took the first year of working together in teams to come anywhere near understanding PSP goals. Sample comments from interviews (Nasca) suggest the hectic, trial-and-error quality of the early period:

> "Non-graded, non-grouped organization probably stimulated the teachers to participate in staff development activities. It was a matter of survival--they just couldn't use their old style of teaching.... It was a matter of working with other staff and just trying to get things done...modifying some things, adapting others and just abandoning those that didn't work..." (Teacher, High School, 3/76)
>
> "The workshops were very helpful. We were just grasping... we were desperate!..." (Teacher, School A, 3/76)
>
> "We really weren't prepared for that horrible first year.... Living through the first year was a valuable learning experience. We finally passed into the teaming process. (Teacher, School c, 3/76)
>
> "Team teaching has been the big thing.... X and Y were very helpful in that first summer workshop in terms of describing teaming. However, it required a year of actually trying it before it was well understood. X was available to provide specific help in learning communities upon request..." (Teacher, School D, 4/76)

Some teachers offered that the Demonstration School in summer of Year 4 was an event that provided closure for them on all the original prescriptions

As one teacher commented: "Even though I've heard it described often, seeing it operate in the Demonstration School made it really meaningful." While these teachers were by summer Year 4 at the point of fully understanding how PSP goals were integrated in learning community life, other PSP teachers were actually running the Demonstration School. Thus we note the variable rate at which PSP staff felt it "all coming together", just as we noted the variable rate at which schools implemented different aspects of the overall innovation.

Individualization of staff development, like individualization of instruction, requires matching the learner to the right activity, at the right time for the right length of time for effective learning. Clearly, people in PSP progressed at different rates in assimilating concepts, changing practices and feeling the coherence or integration of the individual changes in practice. And they had different needs for staff development at different times -- needs for knowledge, for skills, for "psyching up" or motivation -- depending upon role, functions, work settings, and personal learning rates.

## The Staff Development Process

Staff development, viewed as a process designed to promote new behaviors on the part of teachers, may be conceptualized as having four main stages. While it is possible to offer much more elaborate sequences tracing development from awareness of new practices through to reinforcement of new behaviors, the four stages outlined in Figure 4 suffice for present discussion. They are firmly entrenched in the prescriptive literature and have gained sufficient empirical support to warrant serious attention.

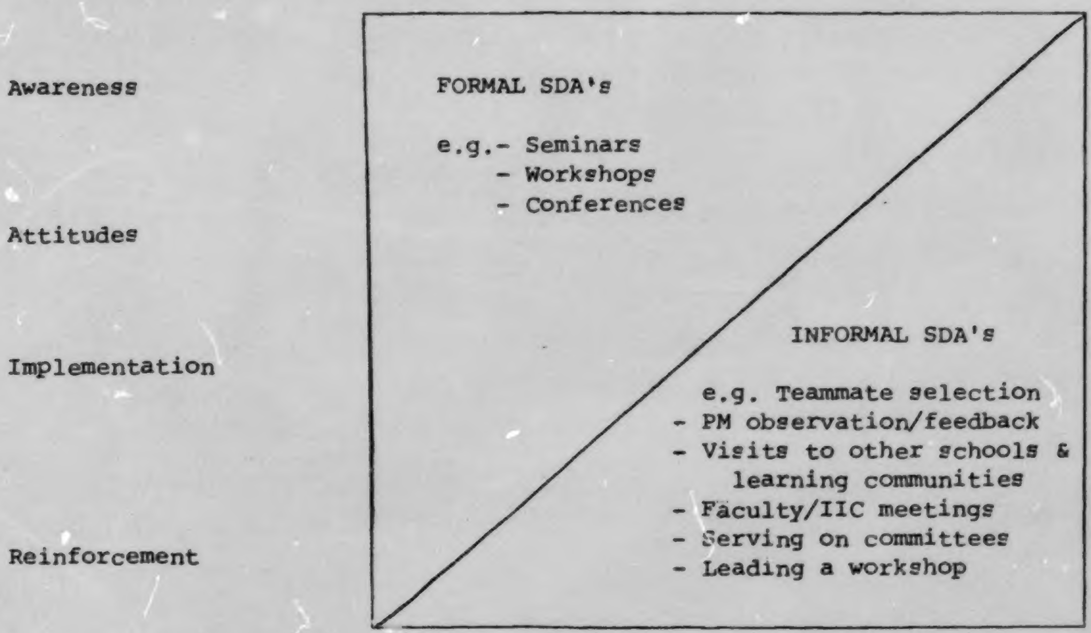
Formal staff development workshops may be seen as contributing most substantially to the beginning stages of staff development, while less formalized activities (or activities not generally viewed as "in-service" activities) become more important at later and possibly more critical stages of the process. (Figure 5)

FIGURE 4: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AS A FOUR-STAGE PROCESS

| SD Stages | SD Activities Characterized By: |
|---|---|
| Awareness | |
| a. Participant gains new information designed to expand awareness of new and/or different educational practices. | Disseminating information by a 'leader'. |
| b. Participant gains information required to make a decision whether or not to explore further a specific educational alternative. | Disseminating information accompanied by clarification of specific questions. |
| Attitude | |
| c. Participant explores implications of integrating educational alternatives with prevailing philosophy. | Participants are encouraged to explore implications of an alternative through seeking specific information and/or through values clarifying type experiences. |
| Implementation | |
| d. Participant practices new behavior specified within the new or different alternatives. | Participant is actively involved in simulated or real situation. |
| e. Participant gains feedback about effectiveness of new behavior. | Participant is provided with feedback designed to reinforce or modify new behavior being developed. |
| Reinforcement | |
| f. | |

SRC/Nasca/77

FIGURE 5: FORMAL AND INFORMAL ACTIVITIES IN THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS


Awareness
Attitudes
Implementation
Reinforcement
FORMAL SDA's
e.g.- Seminars
- Workshops
- Conferences
INFORMAL SDA's
e.g. Teammate selection
- PM observation/feedback
- Visits to other schools & learning communities
- Faculty/IIC meetings
- Serving on committees
- Leading a workshop

EPRC/Nasca/77 (modified)

A variety of informal activities--i.e., activities lacking formally announced meeting dates and agendas and generally carried on in one-to-one relationships with teachers and/or learning community teams--occurred in PSP schools. These were important for all four main stages of the process needed to improve educational practice. PSP leadership averred that these activities and relationships were indeed intrinsic to a pervasive staff development mode in the project. However, they were neither explicated in a PSP model of staff development, nor attended to in the investigative work designed to document and evaluate PSP in the first three and a half years. The finding (see below) of no strong relationship between specific formal staff development activities in Year 4 and practices occurring within PSP learning communities, is accounted for in part by some leveling off in attitude and behavior change by that time. It is also a result, in part, of failing to assure attention to behavioral change processes between the introduction of ideas (as in workshops) and the opportunities to practice and consolidate new behaviors.

In Year 5 three members of PSP central staff (responsible for staff development in Year 1, 4, and 5, respectively) were interviewed to ascertain PSP philosophies of staff development, as were Program Managers.* At the same time interviews with selected classroom teachers who were observed to be using particular instructional processes (e.g., individualized programs, reality therapy, etc.) probed the factors affecting adoption of these behaviors.**

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*They were asked by the investigator (Nasca) for their judgements of the important conditions for a good staff development program; their views on how new behaviors are developed (the process of staff development); and whether they felt that these conditions and processes were established in the PSP staff development program.

**For example, teachers who had adopted an individualized math program (e.g., IMS, Foley, Imperial Math) were asked: When did you first become aware of this program? What helped you actually master the mechanics of the program? What sequence of activities would you recommend for other individuals considering the adoption of new curricular practices?

*FINDING AND JUDGMENT: In many major areas of behavior change, PSP did use a wide range of formal and informal ways of promoting awareness, attitude change, practice and reinforcement of new behaviors--hence the institutionalization of new instructional processes. However, we judge that the absence of an articulated model delineating such staff development stages resulted at times in no systematic follow-through and monitoring after formal workshops; hence diminished effectiveness of some components of staff development in some schools.*

## D. EFFECTIVENESS: OUTCOMES

The effectiveness of staff development, if we follow the stages noted above, could be examined as: (a) effectiveness in making people aware of new practices--assuring sufficient information to enable a decision to be made about whether to explore an alternative practice further; (b) effectiveness in promoting attitude change so that participants accept the implications of integrating educational alternatives with the prevailing philosophy (symbolic adoption); (c) effectiveness in getting people to try out new behaviors; (d) effectiveness in getting new behaviors adopted and incorporated into regular practice (use adoption).

### Effectiveness as Awareness

The sheer volume and variety of staff development workshops throughout the five years of PSP and the numbers of people participating in them--these alone suggest the raising of levels of awareness about different educational alternatives. Where attendance was mandatory (as in the pre-Project major comprehensive workshops and in school-specific workshops from Year 2 onwards), the exposure to new concepts and practices was universal and broad in scope. Activities organized for staff development during the school year, however, were voluntary and narrower in scope--which reduced general exposure but increased the possibility of meeting individual staff needs. In the few cases where there was mandated participation in PSP-wide workshops, it was by school, and the school representative was a volunteer. It was inferred (but not explicated) that the volunteer would share the experience with peers in the school.

Analysis of the design, the content and the participation profiles of a sample of 18 workshops monitored in Years 4-5*, and of data on participant perceptions of effectiveness of the workshops, supports the following findings:

> *FINDINGS**: Analysis of questionnaire data on 18 monitored workshops in Years 4-5 shows that:*
>
> 1. *Approaches used were largely information-giving.*
> 2. *Attendance was heaviest at external consultant, specific-focus activities, least at PSP consultant, general-focus activities.*
> 3. *Goal awareness and preparation for workshops was perceived as more appropriate when workshops were conducted by PSP consultants.*
> 4. *Relevance of goals and the possibility of adopting workshop activities in one's school situation were viewed more positively when the workshops had a specific than when they had a general focus.*
> 5. *Participants rated the workshops positively in every case on five different indicators.*

For this subset of non-mandatory staff development workshops, the focus was largely at the awareness stage of staff development, with participants in some cases indicating that they would be prepared to try out the new practice if they had support in trying to implement it. We judge that most in-service during the school year in PSP was of this type, with workshops being of relatively short duration (less than one day).

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*Criteria used to select these particular workshops for assessment derived from attention to representativeness and pragmatism. We included (a) workshops with general and with specific focus; (b) workshops offered by external and by PSP consultants; (c) workshops of at least half-day duration; (d) workshops for which adequate attendance and questionnaire response data were available. The pragmatic concerns were important. It was difficult to get advance listings of SDAs in Year 4--some were held but not scheduled far ahead; others were scheduled ahead but not held. The situation improved in Year 5, but most of the monitoring activity focused on Year 4; in Year 5 a different approach was judged to be a better use of scarce investigative time.

**See Supporting Materials, Tables SDA-3, 4, 5, 6, 7. As to Finding #1 objectives of the workshops were expressed generally in verbs like: to describe, present, illustrate, display, learn; and in terms of presentor goals rather than participant outcome goals. Participation activities generally included: watching, listening, sharing, discussing, surveying. These features are characteristic of information giving, "filling the vessel" types of learning situations. (Nasca)

## Effectiveness as Attitude Change

Again, poverty of documentation relating teacher attitudes and behaviors to staff development, particularly in the early period constrains the scope of commentary. Year 4 evaluators (summer 1976) sought to assess the impact of intensive doses of major planned staff development on participant attitudes.* Questionnaires focused on individualization and learning community organization, defining four attitudinal dimensions of these: general individualization, teacher-directed individualization, student-directed individualization, and learning community organization.**

The 1976 (pre-Year 5) activities involved summer demonstration schools and one-week in-service workshops for each school. Attitudes were assessed before and after two Project-wide activities (Summer Demonstration Schools at Elementary and Middle levels) and two school-specific activities (the one-week in-service programs in two elementary schools). The results of the analysis were as follows.

*FINDINGS (SD Summer Workshops 1976). By PSP Year 5:*

1. *PSP personnel were major purveyors rather than customers of comprehensive staff development relayed through Summer Demonstration Schools.*
2. *The principal beneficiaries of the Demonstration SDAs were from outside schools.*
3. *Both PSP and non-PSP participants in the Demonstration Schools and in individual school workshops were familiar with and pre-disposed to individualization and learning community organization prior to the workshops, so that*
4. *No significant change occurred in participant attitudes as a result of involvement in the activities.****

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*This was in pursuit of NIE redesign of evaluation for Years 4-5 which sought assessment of attitudes before and shortly after immediate involvement in the activities, and then assessment of attitudes some months later to see whether the changed attitudes had been internalized. Results of the first procedure, in fact, did not offer hope that the intended follow-up would be productive. Consequently the evaluation tack was changed in Year 5 to probe with PSP personnel the sources of observed changed behavior, rather than focusing on specific formal staff development and tracking its impact forward.

**See NIE files on design and instruments of EPRC evaluation team for definitions and the Staff Development Activity and Attitude Questionnaires (Nasca).

***See Support Materials, Tables SDA-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and EPRC Report on Substudy #1, October 1976, Ch. III.

The summer demonstration schools were designed as PSP staff development activities but non-PSP participants were encouraged to attend. Returns to workshop questionnaires showed 16 responses from PSP staff who served as faculty during the demonstration schools, nine from PSP participants, and the remaining 34 from non-PSP participants. While the leadership activities of staff did contribute to their own professional growth, it would seem that SDAs in summer 1976 (and probably in summer 1975) might best be considered a form of deliberate diffusion of innovation, or, as PSP dubbed it, "Transference" (see Ch. 8, below).* The development of a capacity to train others may be seen as the highest stage of staff development, and there is evidence that several PSP school staff members excelled in this.

Detailed examination of the data confirmed other findings (from study of individualization practices, etc.) that implementation of learning communities had stabilized at a point of moderately flexible learning environments and teacher-directed forms of individualization. Lack of attitude change corroborated judgments by PSP staff and external evaluators that:

> *JUDGEMENT: Attitude change (symbolic adoption of PSP concepts) peaked midway through the Project and remained relatively stable thereafter.*

We note that implementation of the new instructional environment and of individualization appeared to be at a level compatible with achievement of major PSP goals and the educational beliefs of teachers.

Educational Beliefs Scale data. Each spring, Year 1 through Year 4, the Teacher Survey included the Educational Beliefs Scale,** data from which can be broken out into three subscales, giving a measure of whether teacher attitudes are more or less traditional in the areas of (a) pupil participation, (b) discipline and control, and (c) instructional goals. Available data for PSP (Year 1 - Year 4) and for I/D/E/A schools are illuminating. The I/D/E/A data are for 1,137 teachers in 49 elementary and middle schools surveyed around 1971-72, grouped according to whether they were primarily teaming (viewed as more innovative), primarily self-contained (viewed as more traditional), or mixed (about 50-50 teaming and self-contained).*

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*The Summer Demonstration Schools, being comprehensive and experiential in nature, were a fine opportunity for teachers new to PSP to get exposure to "integrated, comprehensive change". However, it is not clear from available records whether in fact such participation was mandatory or voluntary for new people. Some Middle School interviewees complained that some people never went through this "initiation".

**See NIE files of EPRC instruments and instrument reports.

*FINDINGS (Educational Beliefs Scale):*

*1. Pupil Participation. For every year (1973-1976) and every level (elementary, middle, high), PSP teacher mean scores were more traditional than either the teaming or the mixed comparison schools (I/D/E/A, 1971-72). Within PSP, elementary teachers scored slightly less traditional than high, and high than middle.*

*2. Discipline and Control. For every year and every level, PSP teachers scored more traditionally than the most traditional I/D/E/A group (self-contained sub-group). PSP elementary teachers scored less traditionally than high school, and high school less traditionally than middle school.*

*3. Instructional Goals. For some levels (primarily elementary) and some years, PSP teachers scored slightly more innovatively than I/D/E/A more innovative groups. PSP middle school teachers scored more traditionally in every year than the most traditional of the comparison groups.*

These findings lead to some interesting judgments--based upon the wide array of data on practices (use adoption) as well as the attitudinal data (symbolic adoption).

*JUDGMENTS: PSP teacher beliefs (per EBS) tend to be relatively more traditional throughout four years of the project than those of teachers in I/D/E/A schools engaged in a range of different levels of innovation (indicated by teaming vs. self-contained classrooms)--with regard to pupil participation and discipline and control. (EBS data)*

*Nevertheless, PSP teacher practices were such that they implemented in significant measure a variety of non-traditional changes in the instructional environment. (Learning Community data)*

*Conclusion: It is possible for teachers to implement highly innovative behaviors in changing educational practice, even while maintaining relatively conservative beliefs (per EBS) about student behavior (pupil participation and discipline and control).*

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*See Support Materials, "Analysis of EBS Data" (Webster 5/78), for tabulated data and findings.

## Effectiveness as Changed Behavior

Attempts to trace behavior to staff development activities in the last two years of the project took two forms: first, tracking behavior after specific staff development activities; and second, probing by interview to identify the source of observed behaviors that reflected innovative practices. The former necessarily focused upon fairly narrowly defined specific staff development activities in which people voluntarily participated. The overall judgment about the impact of these is as follows:

> *JUDGMENT: (SDA Impact) The format of PSP-sponsored workshops during the school year (Year 4 and Year 5 monitoring) tended to be primarily informative. Whether there was ultimately a related behavior change depended usually on the level of systematic follow-through. Often there appeared to be none.*

There seemed to be no follow-through for several of the staff development activities (SDAs) monitored. Investigator narratives (Nasca) offer several examples. An IGE "Participant Observation Cycle (POC) workshop, offered to all teaching staff in Middle School, began with an explanation of process, rationale, and anticipated outcomes. A demonstration of a feedback session, included as part of the cycle was given by workshop leaders and Middle School teachers were then divided into learning community groups to discuss possible application of the POC in their own learning communities. Subsequent visits to Middle School confirmed that the information offered in the workshop, though well presented by two experts, had no observable impact upon teacher behaviors. The investigator was unable to locate any teacher who had used the POC or had heard of it being used in Middle School. Use of POC required an opportunity for teachers to meet during planning time for preliminary and follow-up discussions and time to observe one another during the data collecting process. Scheduling in the school made it impossible for any two teachers to have both planning and observation time available during the day, and the teachers were unwilling to spend time before or after school in mastering the POC skill. Thus, several important stages in the process of developing behavior change were neither planned nor implemented.

Other examples of a similar type included a workshop offered by an educational Training Center consultant and one directed by an experienced elementary school Program Manager, focused on communication patterns. Both had well-organized deliveries, an abundance of handouts, and organized "fun and games" type activities for participants. In both workshops, participants entered into the games with enthusiasm and offered numerous positive comments on the experiences. Again, however, no mechanism was planned or implemented to assure that new behaviors were tried or practiced by participants in their communities, much less a mechanism for assuring their adoption. A math skill games workshop conducted by a PSP resource coordinator was entertaining and enlightening; participants eagerly joined in the activities as they discovered new and fun ways to deal with math skills. Again, however, random observation of the teachers back in their classrooms failed to suggest that any behavior changes had occurred as a result of the workshops. Same story with "How to Use a Telephone" and "Language Experience Approach to Reading" workshops.

Even in areas more central to PSP innovation than those cited above, there are some negative data. Thus one Program Manager averred in Year 5:

> We really did not view teaming or togetherness as being as critical as we now see it. We have had no focused in-service on developing teams and I can see where those groups that work together are the ones that are doing the best job. We have had a few activities that could be called 'getting it together'; for example, reality therapy and some modified "We Agree" sessions--but not a central focus on teaming (PM, Year 5).

During Year 1, five workshops focused on team teaching concepts, two on organizational models and three on classroom management. Thus, the statement that no staff development was focused on teaming reflects a perception of this project manager rather than a reality. It suggests the importance of continuing review and assessment of practices assumed to have been adopted, and periodic infusions of appropriate staff development. The level and quality of teaming, noted earlier, varied considerably throughout the Project, yet there was little focused attention to teaming as such in Years 4-5 SDAs. One source of sustained support for this would be program managers in each school--placing a premium on assuring that program manager knowledge and skills are honed to provide in-school leadership, monitoring, and assistance.*

There are more positive examples of the influence of SDAs. Evidence of changed practice associated with SDAs is available, for example, in the case of interest centers and the use of individual or small group contracts with students. Both of these were stressed in workshops and subsequently appeared in a substantial number of classrooms. Again, the management system implemented in one elementary school was directly attributed to an external consultant. The system provides a method of assuring that small groups are exposed to appropriate variety of activities during a 2-2½-hour Language Arts time period. All teachers in this school used the system introduced by the consultant who had been invited to the school to observe and respond to questions. The suggested management method was adopted by the teachers and they evolved a development process that assured its adoption throughout the building. Thus we have an example of a consultant operating within the school, responding directly to teacher expressed needs, and the introduction of a process that was freely examined, tried, and adopted.

The negative tone of some of the above examples does not imply that formal staff development was not helpful or only of little help. Not so. What is noted is that the examples attest the fuzziness of the PSP staff development model. Many of the "right" things happened (stages in moving toward changed behaviors), but there appeared to be little planned, systematic attention to the sequence of later stages of behavior change following upon several workshops that were monitored.

Inasmuch as PSP staff did implement in significant measure many major components of innovation, requiring considerable behavior change (see sections on learning communities, individualization, participatory decision-making), there was de facto a blend of attention to the major developmental stages relating to awareness, attitudes, implementation and reinforcement. Perhaps these were more clearly focused in Year 1 when there was a Manager of Staff Support Services who not only coordinated the formally planned activities, but also orchestrated the support services from evaluation specialists and from resource coordinators who, it was intended, would spend 50 percent of their time in the schools helping implement change in instructional processes and programs. In any event, the evidence suggests that PSP was not immune to the take-it-or-leave-it character of much in-service education

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*Note that assistance from resource coordinators and others largely came only by request. If there was no systematic monitoring of implementation within the school building, then needs might not be identified let alone ministered to.

## E. EFFECTIVENESS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT: SUMMATIVE JUDGMENTS OF PSP STAFF

If there was not an explicit developmental-stages model, whence came the staff development that prompted observed changes in behavior? Year 5 surveys of program managers and teachers furnish universe data on the effectiveness of staff development as perceived by all the actors in the schools and illuminate their judgments of major sources of help in changing practice. Three major dimensions were probed:*

- Value of Activities and associated level of participation. Respondents rated their participation in and judged the value for them of staff development in seven categories -- individualization, curriculum development, instructional approaches, open education philosophy, teaming, and teacher-student interactions.
- Skill Development. The general categories were expanded to 22 items (17 for high school) reformulated as skill areas. For each one, respondents rated their skill level before and since working in PSP.
- Sources of Help. Using the same set of skill areas, they indicated for each one the major source of help in developing the skill. Sources covered formally scheduled activities, direct personal contact with various types of people, and their own efforts. They could also indicate, if they chose, secondary sources of help that were important to them, but were to designate only one "major" source of help in each area.

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*See NIE files of EPRC instruments, Teacher Surveys, 1977, Section IX (Elementary and Middle Surveys) and Section X (High School Survey).

## Perceived SDA Participation and Value

> *FINDING: SDA Participation and Value. Teachers said they had participated significantly in formal staff development activities and considered these activities to have been valuable to them. Perceived participation and value were somewhat higher for elementary than for Middle and High School teachers.**

Given ratings choices of 'extensive', 'moderate', and 'minimal', teachers (mean scores by level) indicated moderate to extensive participation, and attributed moderate to great value to the activities. The relatively high level of perceived participation is at odds with data on formal activities monitored in Year 4 and Year 5. However, long-term staff undoubtedly were heavily involved in formal activities during early years of the project, and a variety of school-based activities were developmental in intent and effect.**

High School teachers tended to rank highest on perceived staff development participation and value on the "teacher-student interactions" staff development (associated with emphasis on advisor-advisee relationships in their school) and lowest on "teaming" (which was not emphasized at High School). Aside from those two items, the general pattern was for elementary school teachers to indicate greatest participation in and attribute most value to SDAs, whereas Middle School teachers indicated least. The differences are not large, but the tendencies apparent in the data support other indicators.

## Perceived Skill Development

> *FINDING: Skill Development. For every skill area (of 17 listed) and every level of school, teachers felt they had developed their skills during their time with PSP to a degree ranging from "extensive" to "moderate" (on a continuum of ratings from extensive to moderate to minimal). Elementary teachers leaned towards "extensive" and Middle School teachers towards "moderate" ratings.****

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*Support Materials, Tables SDI-6, SDI-7.

**For example, in a few schools by Year 4 learning communities, in turn, were the locus for staff to meet, and teachers in the LC would lead a discussion of their current instructional practices, successes, problems.

***See Support Materials, Tables SDI-8, SDI-9. Mean ratings by level.

Ratings of skill development before joining PSP were "minimal" tending toward "moderate", depending upon the skill area. Of the 17 skill areas, the ones in which elementary teachers felt they had experienced greatest development as a result of involvement in PSP were these:

- -Individualizing instruction in Reading, Language Arts, Math (separate items)
- -Managing multi-grade groups
- -Developing instructional materials
- -Creating learning centers
- -Organizing an open space classroom
- -Team teaching
- -Interpersonal skills (communication) with students

In the view of those most heavily involved--the teachers--there was thus extensive change in levels of key skills, associated with working in the project. This shows up in the perception data most heavily in elementary schools and most heavily in areas closely associated with changing educational practices in order to develop learning community organization and to individualize and personalize instruction. These self-report data on skill development accord well with our findings about relative implementation of concepts and practices by area and level of schooling. In this connection, we note, too, that Middle School teachers tended to see themselves as participating somewhat less in formal staff development activities, valuing the activities slightly less, and increasing their skills during PSP significantly less than elementary teachers.

> *FINDINGS: Program Managers experienced a lesser increment in skill development than teachers. They found staff development valuable--but more so for teachers than for themselves. They thought staff development was good but somewhat less effective than necessary for changing teacher behaviors. And they were divided as to whether the amount of staff development specific areas should be about the same, or more if they had it to do over. (Negligible responses that it should be less).**

Middle and High School Program Managers, like teachers at those levels, reported less skill growth during the project than their elementary school counterparts. In general, however, Managers reported having higher skill levels prior to working in PSP than did teachers. Areas where seven of the ten managers would advise more staff development if they had it to do over were:

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*Support Materials, Tables SDI-10, SDI-12, SDI-13.

- Methods of individualizing instruction
- Curriculum development (including objectives, materials, learning centers)
- Management of student behavior/discipline

and six of the ten Program Managers (or Assistant PMs) would advise more staff development for:

- Staff-student interactions
- Administrative teaming
- Participatory decision-making

The most divided responses were on "open education philosophy". Three Program Managers thought there should be 'more', four 'about the same', and two 'less' staff development on that if they had it to do over.

> *FINDING: As a group, Program Managers judged the various stages of staff development all to be highly important, and rated PSP staff development between 'quite good' and 'very strong' for each stage. The biggest disparity between perceived importance and actual quality of staff development was at the final stage--"opportunity to gain feedback from an expert about progress toward aquiring new behavior".**

These program manager judgments about overall PSP performance in the various stages of staff development are more favorable than evaluator findings (Nasca) which indicated that the last three stages of staff development (opportunity to examine implications of adopting new behavior; opportunity to practice under supervision; and opportunity for expert feedback) were weak for specific SDAs monitored in Year 4 and Year 5 (see above). As we shall see, however, PSP personnel perceived that their skill development derived from a variety of sources, and not just from formal activities.

## Major Sources of Help in Skill Development

Using the same list of skill areas (22 for elementary and middle teachers, 17 for high), teachers indicated the major source of assistance they personally had received in developing specific skills during their experience with PSP. The listed sources were:

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*Support Materials, Table SDI-14.

Formally scheduled activities:

1. Project-wide activities
2. School-specific activities

Direct personal contact, via help from:

3. PSP resource staff
4. Outside consultants
5. Other teachers
6. Program managers

and a final option was:

7. Your own personal efforts

*FINDING: Teachers as a group in elementary schools (where we judged there was strongest implementation of the new instructional environment) rated formal staff development activities (PSP-wide and school-specific) as the most important source of help twice as often as they did personal contacts or their own efforts. Middle and high school teachers cited their own personal efforts more frequently as the major source of skill development, personal contacts second, and formal activities last.*

There are many apparent variations across the elementary schools. For example, School D teachers cite direct personal contact and their own efforts more than twice as often as formal SDAs. School C teachers, on the other hand, give heaviest weight to formal SDAs, considerable but lesser weight to direct personal contact, and rarely checked their own efforts as being the prime source of help. These ratings tie in closely with other findings about the two schools.

When examined by skill area, the data show further notable variations. For example, in the area of individualization, elementary teachers as a group indicated that major source of help varied by subject area. For individualizing Reading, most help came from PSP workshops and 'other teachers'; for individualizing Language Arts, most help came from PSP workshops and PSP resource staff; but for individualizing Science and Social Studies, personal efforts were rated as most important with PSP workshops equally important in Science.

Further interesting patterns may be highlighted by listing them thus:

| Skill Area | Major Source of Help in Developing Skills |
|---|---|
| Managing multi-grade groups<br>Mainstreaming handicapped students | Formal PSP workshops rated most important; "other teachers" a close second |
| Team teaching | The reverse: "Other teachers" most important; PSP workshops a close second |
| Developing learning objectives<br>Developing instructional materials | Formal workshops and "my own efforts" rated equally frequently as most important |
| Interpersonal skills with colleagues<br>Using reality therapy<br>Using behavior modification principles | Formal workshops most important |
| Interpersonal skills with students<br>Personal self-awareness<br>Personal decision-making capabilities<br>Managing student behavior/discipline<br>Establishing home-school relations<br>Teaching students how to improve their decision-making capabilities | "My own efforts" ranked most frequently as the major source of help |

Program Manager perceptions of the major sources of help in developing skills differ somewhat from those of teachers. While respondents were asked to rate only one source as "most important", they could if they chose, check another as being "extremely valuable".

> *FINDING: Both teachers and Program Managers attributed considerable influence to formal PSP staff development activities. Aside from that, Program Managers indicated that school-specific activities, resource staff and consultants were "extremely valuable", whereas teachers tended to rank these sources relatively lower, placing much greater emphasis on their own personal efforts.**

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*Support Materials, Tables SDI-18, SDI-19.

Program managers were partially responsible for securing staff development assistance, particularly from the three sources where the greatest differences from teachers in perceived value are noted. They would tend to feel some ownership of these activities. Again, the data suggest the interest of differences across schools. For example, in School A, the Program Manager and the teachers rated formal staff development activities as the most important source of help; in School C the Program Manager relied more on interaction and the teachers tended to do so also.

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As we reach the end of this discussion of staff development, the indicators are accumulating to support some general themes of this document:

- Implementation of learning communities, with the multiple characteristics described in Chapter 3, was strongest at the level of elementary schools. That, too, is the level at which formal staff development activities were strongest, where the greatest increment in skills was experienced, and where SDAs were viewed as the most important source of help in skill building.

- Implementation of learning communities, with the multiple characteristics described in Chapter 3, was much less strong at post-elementary levels. But so was staff development. Staff tended to cite other sources than formal SDAs as the major source of help to them as they tried to implement innovative practices.

- Needs for skill development among building administrators were not a strong focus of the staff development program. Program Manager leadership in instructional development and staff development emerged when it did, less as a result of deliberate staff development effort to recruit or hone such skills, than through the personal interests and attributes of individuals.

- Similarities and differences across schools apparently implementing the same complex innovation in the instructional environment merit much closer attention than they can be given here. Whereas there were broadly equal opportunities for all elementary schools, for example, to benefit from available staff support resources, the schools perceived their needs differently, valued the resources differently, and retained some individual character throughout the change process.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## DECISION-MAKING WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

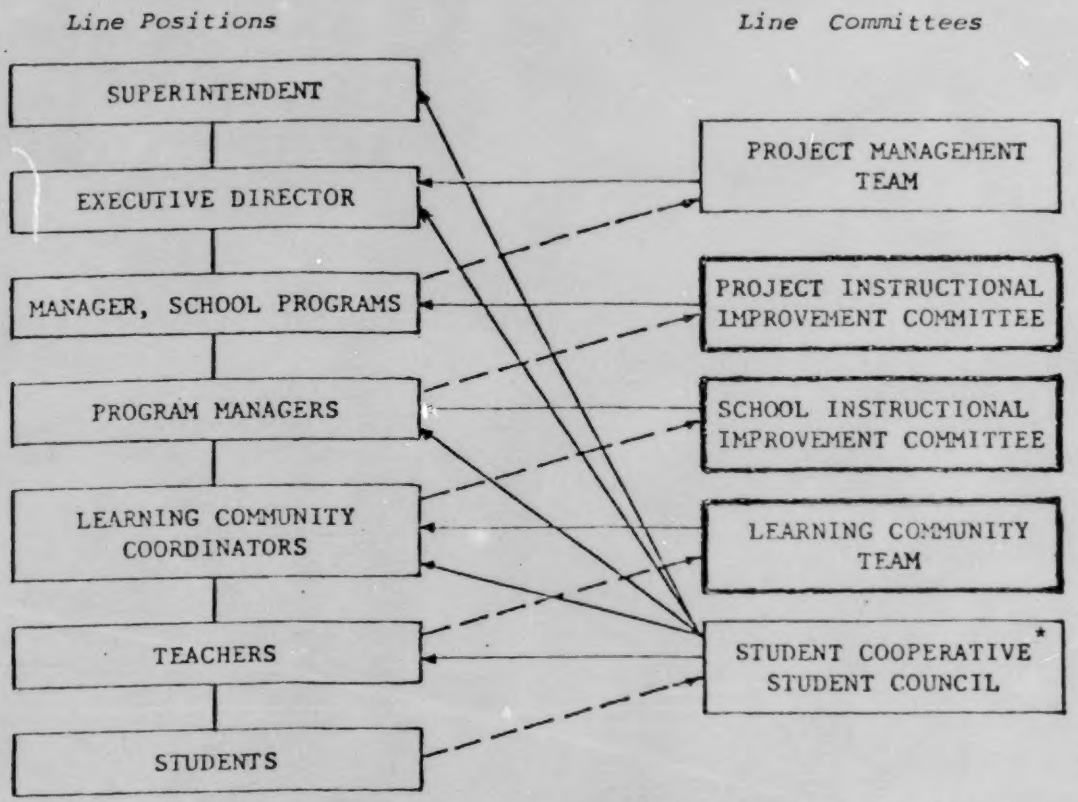
### A. INTENTIONS

Decision-making mechanisms were created in the PSP to facilitate a flow of influence and involvement from three separate and distinct sources: the lay community, the professional community (other than educators employed by the District), and the school community. Here we focus on the involvement of the school community (specifically the staff) in project decisions and management, while Chapter 6 will discuss the involvement of the broader community outside the schools.

The basic intention of PSP planners was that the decision-making process within schools change during the project such that programmatic authority, previously vested very heavily in school principals, would be redistributed more broadly among the teaching staff. Those most affected by instructional decisions were to participate more effectively in the decision-making process. The principle of devolving authority for decisions to the level of the group responsible for implementing the decisions was to permeate the PSP system. It was variously referred to as "participative management" and "school community involvement" by PSP staff, and as "the new programmatic authority" by NIE.

PSP created a variety of mechanisms at school and project level to involve students and staff in decision-making. The lines of authority and responsibility are portrayed in the organization chart as flowing from Executive Director to Manager of School Programs, to school program managers, to learning community teams, to students; and the lines of formal influence flow back through those channels. To complete the formal structure, each level was organized into a committee, which was assigned authority over specific types of program-related decisions and was to provide inputs to the level above it, thereby influencing decisions made at that level. Figure 7 depicts these structures.

FIG.7: DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES IN THE PSP SCHOOL COMMUNITY


*Line Positions*
*Line Committees*
SUPERINTENDENT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MANAGER, SCHOOL PROGRAMS
PROGRAM MANAGERS
LEARNING COMMUNITY COORDINATORS
TEACHERS
STUDENTS
PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM
PROJECT INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
LEARNING COMMUNITY TEAM
STUDENT COOPERATIVE STUDENT COUNCIL*

* The High School Student Cooperative and Student Council are unique in that they provided input to several units, including the District Superintendent through the Cooperatives Board (See Ch.6, below).

The key decision-making vehicles for project staff were the learning community teams, the School Instructional Improvement Committee, and the Project Instructional Improvement Committee. Evaluation focused on whether these mechanisms were implemented, the extent to which they operated as intended, and the reactions of participants to their involvement in the decision-making process.

*OVERALL FINDING: PSP achieved its objective of "improving the quality and quantity of involvement of the school community in the decision-making process" and established a process wherein "the persons most closely affected by decisions have an influence in making the decisions." While there was variation among schools and over time and problems were encountered, the overall level of implementation of the objective was high.*

## B. GENERAL INDICATORS OF TEACHER INFLUENCE ON DECISION-MAKING

### Indicators of Teacher Power

At the end of each of the first four years of PSP, a Teacher Power Questionnaire was administered to all teachers.* The basic instrument involved a list of 21 decision areas and respondents checked whether they felt that teachers in their school did/did not have "a lot of influence" in each area. In Years 2, 3, and 4 they also indicated whether they thought teachers should/should not have influence in these areas. Morover, Teacher Power data from 49 schools in western states allow some comparison with non-PSP schools that were also involved in a change process.**

*FINDINGS: Increase in Teacher Power to influence decisions***

*1. In every PSP school between Year 1 and Year 4 there was an increase in perceived extent of teacher influence in decision-making.*

*2. At the same time there was a general increase in teacher satisfaction with teacher influence.*

*3. In Year 1 few PSP schools registered the same level of influence as did the high level innovating schools in western states. By Year 4 most of them equaled or surpassed that level.*

*4. There tended to be greater agreement among PSP faculties (less uncertainty) than in the western schools.*

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*The Teacher Power Questionnaire was originally developed by I/D/E/A (Institute for the Development of Educational Activities).

**Same schools for which we presented Educational Beliefs Scale comparison in Chapter 4. Support Materials TP-1, TP-2, TP-3, TP-4 summarize the data and support the findings noted here.

> *5. Middle and High Schools lagged behind elementary on the power index, and Middle in terms of the index of change (lowest increment in influence Year 1 - Year 4) and on index of satisfaction.*
>
> *6. Perceived levels of influence varied according to decision areas, but were fairly consistent over time. Perceived levels of satisfaction tended to increase over time.*

We judge that, had there been pre-PSP data available for the schools, teacher power to influence decisions would have shown even more dramatic change. As it is, there is evidence that PSP teacher power was viewed (we judge rightly) as substantially greater than that of other Greenville County teachers. In fall of Year 5 we administered the instrument to teachers in all "transference schools"--schools within the County that were part of the planned attempt to spread PSP concepts and practices beyond the Greer area (see Chapter 7). The resulting data support the finding:

> *FINDING: Decision-making in PSP schools was more participatory than in other district schools. In all but one transference school surveyed, PSP teacher influence and satisfaction were perceived to be greater.**

The lone transference school that exhibited a pattern of teacher influence similar to that of PSP schools was managed by a principal who had been director of the planning stage for PSP and had held the key position of Manager of Staff Support Services in the project in Year 1. When he left PSP he developed a new PSP-style school in another part of the school district.

### General Reactions of School Staff to the Redistribution of Authority

The participative style of management promoted in PSP called for redistribution of authority and responsibility for decisions affecting the instructional program. As of the end of the Project, reactions of school staff to the change were largely positive.

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*Backup materials: Mini Report on Teacher Power in Transference Schools.

*FINDINGS: Overall, by the end of the PSP, teachers and program managers reported:**

- *Personal satisfaction with the amount of authority of teachers in instructional decision-making*
- *Teachers were being accorded sufficient authority*
- *They were assuming their share of responsibility accordingly*
- *Teacher authority in PSP schools was greater than, or at least equal to, that in non-PSP schools*

There were some variations across schools. Staff of Schools A, B, and C indicated clear satisfaction on all the indicators. In remaining schools the high majority showed favorable overall reactions, but there were indications of pockets of disgruntlement. In two elementary schools and in Middle School a small minority felt that teachers were not assuming their share of responsibility. This ties in with periodic expressions of frustration, notably by some learning community coordinators in School D and Middle School that some people were "not carrying their weight". In these schools and in the high school there were some teachers who felt "somewhat dissatisfied" with the amount of authority vested in teachers. Program Managers, making an overall comparison with non-PSP schools, all felt that PSP teachers had more authority than others in the district; teachers tended to split between those who thought they had more authority and those who thought they had about the same.

Our judgment, supported by the array of data, is that there was substantial redistribution of authority in PSP which increased teacher influence and involvement in instructional decisions. As might be expected, the authority was greater within learning communities than at other levels of the system.

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*Support Materials, Table TP-15.

## C. DECISION-MAKING IN LEARNING COMMUNITIES

*FINDING: At the elementary school level PSP teachers functioned in the decision-making process as project designers originally intended. They had substantial influence on programmatic decisions affecting individual learning communities in every elementary school. At post-elementary level teachers functioned as prescribed in some decisional areas and not in others.*

The programmatic decision areas prescribed for learning communities involved:

1. Establishing content of educational program within the community
2. Establishing student objectives
3. Assessing or diagnosing each child
4. Selecting student activities
5. Selecting materials, media and supplies
6. Selecting mode of instructional presentation
7. Managing time, space and personnel
8. Setting daily schedules
9. Establishing standards of pupil behavior
10. Establishing physical arrangement of classroom

Data from various survey response sets in Years 2 through Year 5 support the finding noted. There was a high degree of staff consensus in elementary schools on what should be and what is the influence of teachers in these ten decision areas. At Middle School programmatic authority was exercised by teachers at learning community level in the last six areas, but not so much in the first four. (The school administrators reported that teachers influenced all areas.) The high school had no identifiable student learning communities, although three teacher planning groups were labeled thus. According to teacher self-reports, they did influence four of the above areas (5, 6, 9, 10), they did not exert influence in two (2 and 4), and they were divided in their perceptions of influence in the remaining areas.*

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*See Support Materials, Table TP-5 for display of agreements by school on 14 learning community related items, including the ten listed above. EPRC, Year 4 Final Report on the New Instructional Environment, gives elaborate analysis of these and other decision-making data for Year 4.

The distinction between influencing a decision and actually making one was pointed out in discussions with some PSP personnel, so Year 5 surveys of teachers and program managers included a question asking directly for perceptions of who makes most decisions in specified areas and how much influence teachers have. The results confirm the earlier findings.*

As to comparison schools, a broad indicator of differences between PSP and transference schools in the county is suggested by a summary statistic: the overall mean percentage of teachers indicating that they do have influence in the decision-making areas affecting learning communities. For PSP elementary schools this was 90 percent (range 84%-97%); for transference elementary schools it was 66 percent (range 33%-80%, with the exceptional school noted above scoring 90%). At middle school level, the PSP mean was 76 percent, whereas the mean for transference middle schools was 69 percent (66%-74%). The lone transference high school had a mean agreement score of 60 percent, whereas the PSP high school with which it was paired scored 69 percent. Thus, despite deliberate systematic exposure of transference schools to PSP concepts and programs, PSP teachers as a group clearly felt they exerted considerably more influence on key decision areas than their counterparts in a subset of other district schools.

## D. DECISION-MAKING AT SCHOOL LEVEL

The primary locus for decision-making in matters involving more than one learning community was intended to be the School Instructional Improvement Committee. The resolution of curriculum problems, the formulation of instructional goals, the planning of in-service education, and the coordination of home-school communication -- these were major functions assigned to IICs. In traditional schools, these would be realms of authority and responsibility of building principals. To what extent did PSP committees succeed in changing the traditional pattern?

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*Support Materials, Table TP-10.

> *GENERAL FINDING: By the end of the PSP, school IICs were functioning basically in a manner congruent with project intentions, with the major qualification that the contents of their deliberations were not as instructionally oriented as PSP planners had originally envisioned.*

Before examining the operation of IICs a little more closely, we report briefly the components of Teacher Power data that focus more upon school-wide than upon learning community/classroom decision areas.

## Teacher Influence on School-wide Decisions

We noted above the clear increase in overall programmatic authority of PSP teachers in Years 1-4 of PSP. In Year 4 the Teacher Power list was expanded to 33 items to accommodate more items reflecting PSP-specific intentions. Of these, 19 items dealt with decisions affecting more than one learning community. The pattern of responses by all teachers to these school-wide items is much more complex than in the case of learning community areas, as might be expected. There is no consistent pattern of programmatic authority exercised by teachers on school-wide decisions across the schools. Influence was perceived to vary by school and type of decision. However, though no specific influence upon school-wide decisions by teachers generally was delegated by PSP deisgn, save through the school Instructional Improvement Committees, the response data indicate that teachers in each school did feel they exerted considerable influence, the extent varying by school; and in this sense the school-level decision-making process was felt to involve more than just members of the IICs.*

## School Instructional Improvement Committees (IICs)

Intentions. In each school the IIC was composed of the program manager and the learning community coordinators, with the program manager serving as chairperson. Other staff members, students, and parents could serve on the committee as regular members or as ad hoc representatives when special contributions were desired. The groups were to meet weekly to:

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*Support Materials, Tables TP-13 and TP-14.

- discuss and resolve problems related to curriculum matters involving two or more learning communities
- to formulate instructional goals
- to plan in-service education
- to coordinate home-school communication

It was intended that school-wide communication would be facilitated by learning community coordinators serving as liaisons between teacher teams and school administrators through their membership in the IIC.

Implementation. Organization and operations in the early part of the project, according to PSP self-reports, varied across schools and productivity was report as "somewhat limited"*. Some met after school hours, others during school hours, with teammates "covering" for teachers who attended sessions. Members were expected to discuss concerns with teammates prior to meetings and then be the voice of the learning community within the ICC. Afterwards they were to report out decisions to their teams. Early problems noted in PSP documents included communication difficulties (teachers feeling inadequately represented in some communities); and agendas that focused too much on administrative details and were controlled primarily by the program manager. PSP judged that these difficulties diminished in later years, averring better communication, more participatory development of agendas, and increased attention to instructional matters.

Some committees restructured their membership and modified or expanded ICC functions over time. For example, the High School used the IIC as an informal liaison between administration and teachers the first year rather than as a policy-making or problem-solving group. In Year 2, a group of teachers met with the new program manager and functioned virtually as an advisory committee. By Year 3, the school had established an Educational Improvement Committee (EIC) to include authority in non-instructional as well as instructional areas. The EIC included program managers and learning community coordinators; additionally it involved the Facilitator of Operations, a member from the Guidance Department, a member of the media staff, and two student representatives. This group drew up a set of by-laws that took effect from Year 4 when it was renamed the Program Improvement Committee to indicate involvement in total program. At that point the composition was expanded to include a member of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), effective Year 5.

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*See PSP Final Report, Section 5, p. 14 et seq. (1977) and PSP Continuation Application (circa 1975).

IICs did not all have a history of such changes in membership and function. However, the illustration of the high school does suggest concerns about representativeness, communication, and the relative instructional/non-instructional scope of the committees.*

Both survey data (staff perceptions of IIC operation in Years 4 and 5) and a series of systematic observations of IIC meetings in Year 5 (four in each school) support the specific findings that follow on the implementation of intended IIC functions.**

*FINDINGS:*

1. *All PSP IICs were dealing with problems involving more than one learning community.*

2. *In Year 5, only a small proportion of time spent during observed IIC meetings was devoted to curriculum and instruction, including formulation of instructional goals.*

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*Note: By Year 5 some project schools were using the term Program Improvement Committee (PIC), a term congruent with current IGE terminology, and reflecting a perceived scope of responsibility extending beyond the direct instructional program.

**Support Materials, Tables IIC-1 through IIC-5.

In only two schools (A and B) did a large majority of teachers report that the IIC was substantially involved in curricular development--confirming the observation findings. Whatever may have been the case in early years of the PSP, towards the end of the project the IICs were not as deeply involved in instructional matters as PSP planners envisioned. And, we add judgmentally, this was probably to the detriment of the Project.

*3. Most PSP IICs were involved in staff development concerns.*

During observed meetings in Year 5, IICs in Schools A and F spent over one-fourth of their time on in-service concerns, and teachers in School A reported the highest degree of IIC involvement in in-service. In Schools D and H, observed meetings, in-service was not discussed at all. In School C the time allotted to this was small; yet School C had earned a strong reputation for quality and leadership in staff development--suggesting that whatever role the IIC had in this area peaked in some schools earlier in the project. We conclude that the amount of in-service planning conducted by IICs varied considerably across schools and over time, with some exerting a major effort and others displaying only a minor undertaking by Year 5.

*4. All PSP school IICs spent considerable meeting time on announcements and discussion and most were perceived by teachers as facilitating school-wide communication of staff.*

Although no qualitative assessment was made of the type or efficiency of communication recorded during observed meetings, a review of items discussed revealed that substantial amounts of information were shared at IIC meetings. With the notable exception of Schools D and F, most teachers reported that the IIC facilitated communication. We conclude that the IICs indeed were effective communication vehicles, although the content of communication may not have been as instructionally oriented as PSP planners originally intended.

*5. There was general agreement among staff that the IICs were efficient in instructional decision-making, but diversity of opinion on the amount of time spent on decision-making, the nature of IIC influence, and the actual locus of decision-making.*

This finding reflects disagreement among teachers and program managers as to whether the purpose of the IIC was to provide input to the Program Managers for their decisions or to actually make instructional decisions. Likewise, there were differences of opinion as to who should make instructional decisions at school level--IIC, entire faculty, or Program Manager--with High School teachers (H) favoring the Program Manager, School A the faculty, School B the IIC, and other schools showing no clear majority opinion.

> *6. Elementary and high school teachers were satisfied with the level of their influence on the content of IIC meetings (Year 2 - Year 4 annual surveys); but for Middle School teachers there was a notable gap between desired and actual influence.**

The general indications are that staff at elementary and high levels thought that they had a voice in the IIC and knew what was going on there, but that Middle School teachers would have liked to have more influence on the IIC than they felt they had. The High School data support the claim in PSP's Final Report: "Through establishing an easily accessible channel of communication from staff members to the decision-making body and by providing prompt response, the PIC assured participation in school-wide decision-making."

Continuity. Most teachers perceived the IIC to be needed in their school as it currently operated in Year 5, but there were indications that suggested some likely changes of direction or emphasis in post-PSP years.

Survey and interview data suggest some directions of change. In Schools D, F, and G (Middle),.35-50 percent of the teachers and LCCs thought that changes should be made in the operation of the IIC. In School D and Middle School, this appeared to be associated with ambivalence or division of opinion among staff as to the purpose of the IIC and the extent to which it filled prescribed functions. The prognosis for continued need and support of the IIC after the project at Middle School was judged to be high--given the sheer size of the school and the perception of 80 percent of the faculty that the IIC was efficient in making instructional decisions. On the other hand, in School D, the future of the IIC was less predictable (low indicators of perceived fulfillment of functions, and somewhat low indicators of LCC initiatives in ite presentation and decision orientation). In the smallest schools it seemed likely that, in the interests of staff solidarity as well as effective communication, there might be a move to constitute the whole staff as the IIC. In all cases, it seemed highly probable that after PSP the Committee would be used as a vehicle for non-instructional as well as instructional concerns and decisions--a deliberate broadening of function recognized by renaming the IIC the "Program Improvement Committee" in some schools ('program' being conceived as wider in scope than 'instruction').

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*Related Materials, Table TP-3, Item #10.

## E. PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING AT PROJECT LEVEL

The management structure of an organization can usually be determined from two sources. In the first place, the official blueprint organizational charts reveal how the organization was intended to function. In the second place, interviews with participants and observations of their interactions reveal how in practice the organization functions. At school and learning community levels, as we have seen, the actual and intended functioning were broadly consonant, and there were no changes in basic organizational structure over the period of the project. At project level, the picture is more complex.

> *GENERAL FINDING: At project level the blueprint organizational design was changed over the course of the project. There were modifications in structures, functions, and roles which were occasioned by, and then in turn affected, implementation experience.*
>
> *GENERAL JUDMENT: It is judged that early changes in management structure reduced potential effectiveness of some key components of the change strategy; later changes served in part to strengthen and in part to expand the scope of PSP activities.*

We will discuss in turn the nature and effectiveness first of the general management organization and then, more specifically of the Project Instructional Improvement Committee which was a particular interest of NIE.

## The Original and Revised Management Organization

The first official organizational chart of PSP was written into the original proposal (Figure 7). Significant modifications were made at the end of Year 1, resulting in a structure which operated during Year 2 and Year 3. The second official management organization chart was written into the Continuation Application (1975) and represents more closely how the organization evolved and was working during the last years of the Project (Figure 8).

Some features are noteworthy when we compare project-level management in the two official charts. First, some new positions appear in the revised version. Of these, the most significant are the Coordinator of Staff Development and the Coordinator of Transference. The first was given specific responsibility for sets of tasks that had been dispersed to others on part-time or ad hoc basis during Years 2 and 3. The second was a new position attesting the significance attached by Federal sponsors and the District, and hence the project, to deliberate plans and action to promote components of PSP-type innovation beyond the project schools. The first type of change, thus, was to add personnel to the organizational structure to perform new functions or to perform in more specialized fashion tasks that had been undertaken by others with more general functions.

Second, we note that both lines of communication and the implicit hierarchy of positions were altered. In particular, program managers and resource coordinators were placed under the same person--the Manager of School Programs--and not under separate managers as before. This move occurred at the end of Year 1 and was primarily occasioned by role conflict between resource coordinators and program managers in the early period of the project. The groups had squabbles over "turf", the program managers seeing resource coordinators as having too much power, particularly over decisions about what programs should be bought for schools, while the resource coordinators often found the program managers to be "too authoritative and uncooperative in agreeing on how best to use instructional money". The conflict was considerably reduced by the introduction of a mangement consultant who conducted role clarification sessions.

Fig. 8: ORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE PIEDMONT SCHOOLS PROJECT
As printed in the Project Plan/Proposal, March 1972

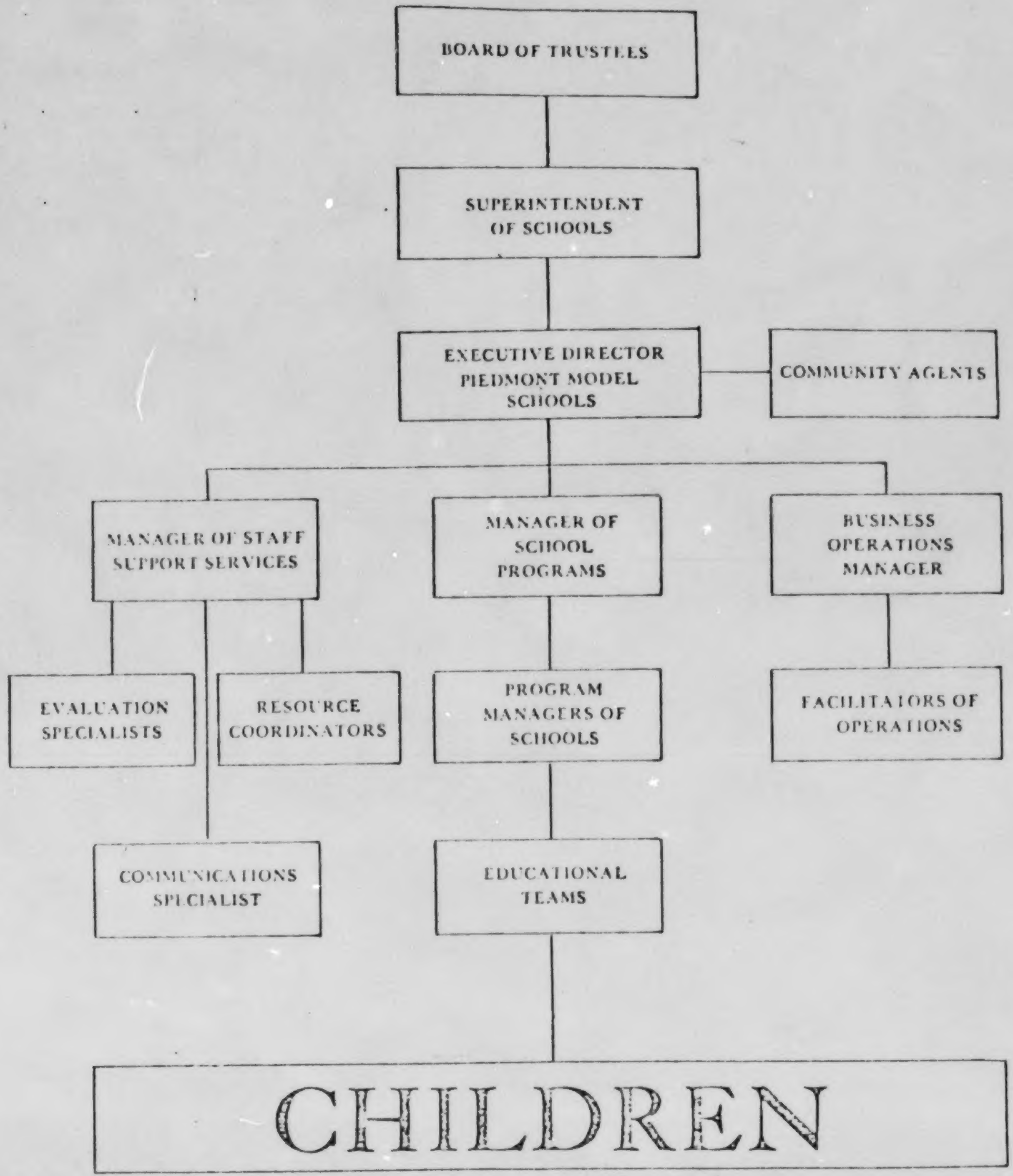
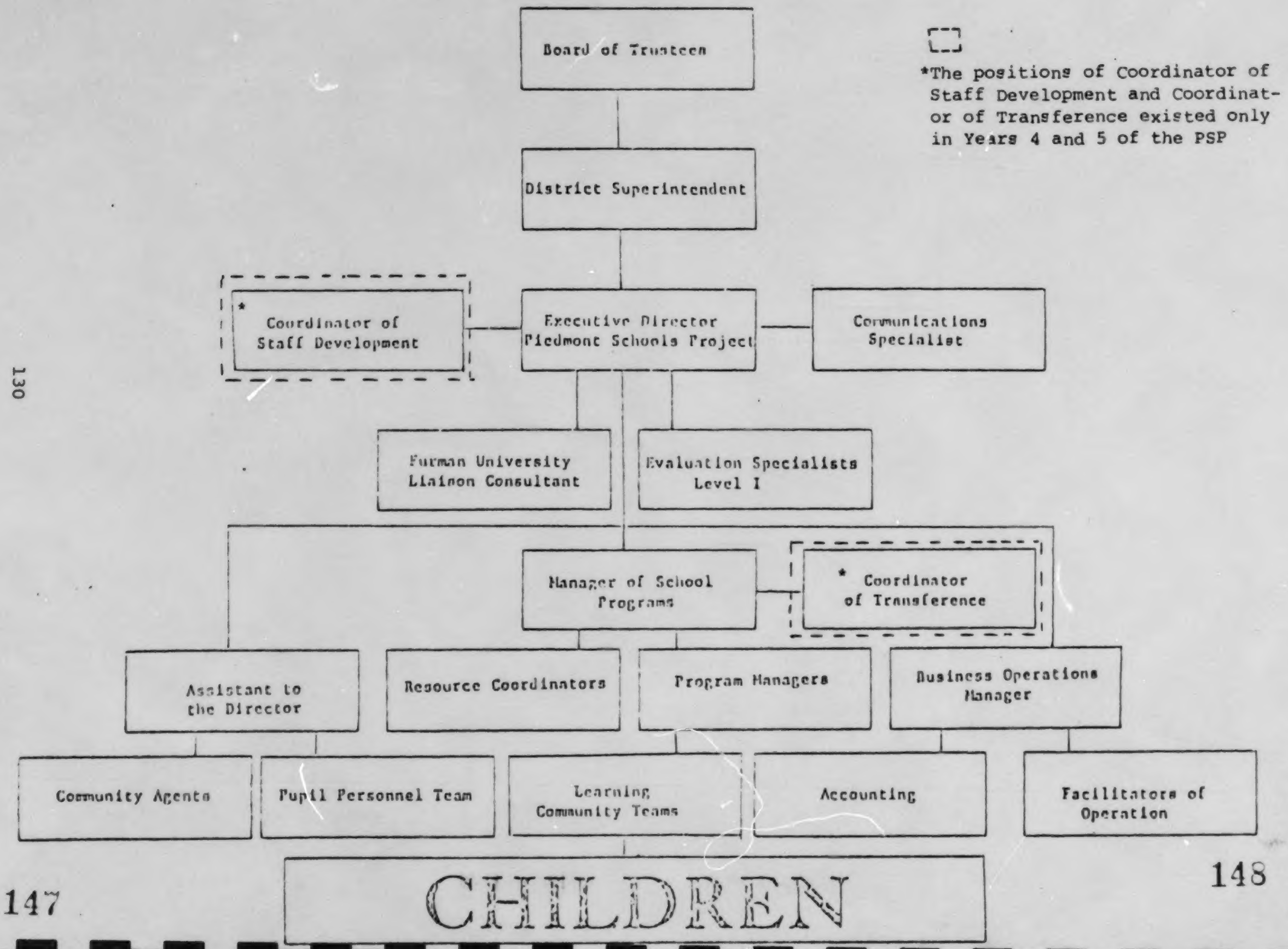

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PIEDMONT MODEL SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY AGENTS
MANAGER OF STAFF SUPPORT SERVICES
MANAGER OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS
BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER
EVALUATION SPECIALISTS
RESOURCE COORDINATORS
PROGRAM MANAGERS OF SCHOOLS
FACILITATORS OF OPERATIONS
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
EDUCATIONAL TEAMS
CHILDREN

Fig. 9: REVISED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE PIEDMONT SCHOOLS PROJECT
As printed in the Continuation Application during Year 3


Board of Trustees
District Superintendent
* Coordinator of Staff Development
Executive Director Piedmont Schools Project
Communications Specialist
Furman University Liaison Consultant
Evaluation Specialists Level I
Manager of School Programs
* Coordinator of Transference
Assistant to the Director
Resource Coordinators
Program Managers
Business Operations Manager
Community Agents
Pupil Personnel Team
Learning Community Teams
Accounting
Facilitators of Operation
CHILDREN

*The positions of Coordinator of Staff Development and Coordinator of Transference existed only in Years 4 and 5 of the PSP

While there continued to be some friction, the program managers emerged with authority over decisions about programs and staff in their schools whereas the resource coordinators had "the authority of expertise" and operated as skilled consultants. One positive feature of the inordinate time spent by all staff on preparing the Continuation Application, was the shoulders-to-the-wheel camaraderie that developed among different role groups, under pressure, the resource coordinators being perceived as working well in crisis.

Third, certain positions were eliminated from the original chart and others added in their place. Most significant among these, the position of Manager of Staff Support Services was eliminated at the end of the first year and the salary used to hire a new person as administrative assistant to the director--handling many of the latter's functions as Area Superintendent in the District. PSP formal reports suggest the rationale for these changes*, while observer documents of the time convey the underlying tensions and circumstances more fully.** Aside from the real need to relieve the administrative overload of the project director, tensions had developed among senior project managers and among personnel immediately reporting to them. These were in part engendered by the stress involved in launching such an ambitious project and the need to learn new roles. In part, too, they were a reflection of differences in perspective and working style that developed as the script began to be acted out in the real life setting of the Piedmont schools. By the end of the first year important decisions were made which changed some of the roles and some of the actors, with roles being bent in some cases to fit the actors. At the end of Year 1, two top managers left -- the Manager of School Programs, who was succeeded by another person, and the Manager of Staff Support Services, whose position was "eliminated" and salary transferred to the new assistant to the director. At the same time, three program managers left PSP schools and a fourth changed schools; two resource coordinators left; and the Furman

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*See, for example, PSP Final Report, sections on Differentiated Staffing and Decision-making.

**Notably: Records of meetings of Resource Coordinators, and of Project Instructional Improvement Committee, and Interviews with key personnel

University liaison, who had significant influence on instructional programs and process, also left. These changes in major actors in the drama of change were partly the result of personal decisions, and partly of management decisions. The decisions to redefine lines of authority and responsibility were adaptive management decisions made to solve real problems that arose in the course of implementation. However, they were not without cost.

> *JUDGMENT: Organizational changes made at the end of Project Year 1 solved some problems at the price of dissolving the role and some of the critical functions of the Manager of Staff Support Services, and of overburdening the Manager of School Programs. This had an adverse effect upon staff development, particularly, which lacked strong leadership and coordination in Years 2 and 3.*

## The Project Instructional Improvement Committee

In addition to the formal positions of authority in the organization, there was a committee structure at project level (see Figure 7, p. 15). At this level, the major committee of interest is the School Instructional Improvement Committee (PIIC). There was, additionally, a Management Committee, a Curriculum Steering Committee, and a Steering Committee of Teachers.

The PIIC was intended to function as a "broad policy determining and decision making body in program areas".* It followed the organizational pattern of the School IICs (program manager plus learning community coordinators), by bringing together the Project Executive Director, the Manager of School Programs, and the program managers of each school--all of whom were voting members of the Committee. While it was foreseen that the group's tasks would include "routine matters of program coordination", it was primarily designed to "improve and coordinate educational activities", including considering "problems involving two or more schools". Regular meetings were to be held throughout the project period, with agendas "planned in advance and built on priority needs".*

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*All quoted functions are from the PSP Continuation Application, 1975, p. 19--Projected Status of Project Instructional Improvement Committee.

> *GENERAL FINDING & JUDGMENT: The PIIC functioned regularly throughout the period of the PSP, with some broadening of membership. While it fell short of being a broad policy determining and decision-making group in the eyes of program managers, it did provide a significant vehicle for cross-school communication and for influencing decisions. However, the group devoted more time to non-instructional matters than originally intended, and less to sharing problems than some had hoped for.*

Membership was modified throughout the five-year period. In the first year the Executive Director presided and only he and the program managers and Manager of School Programs were permanent members. Other persons were involved on an ad hoc basis (Director of Level I Evaluation, Communications Specialist, Furman University consultant). In Year 2 the Furman liaison consultants were added. And in Years 4 and 5 the Coordinators of Transference and of Staff Development were added as permanent members--reflecting increased concern with these areas in the last years of the project. From Year 2 on the MSP was designated by the Director to preside over meetings.

Agenda items were content analyzed by PSP in a 15-month period spanning Years 1 and 2, and by Level II evaluators in Year 4. In brief:

> *Early period*: 44 percent items dealt directly with the project instructional program; 28 percent general announcements; 12 percent business items; evaluation and testing, 7 percent; budgetary and district policies, 8 percent. (*Continuation Application*, 1975)
>
> *Year 4*: 21 percent dealt with programmatic aspects of PSP involving extended discussion or a decision; 30 percent with general announcements about program; 41 percent with general announcements about non-programmatic aspects.*

As to decision-making, the Year 4 analysis determined that some 23 decisions were made by the PIIC.** Only one was an instructional policy decision having major impact on overall PSP Program. Six others involved review or acceptance of curriculum specifications--mostly based on position papers written up to two years earlier which had long made their influence felt on curricula through the efforts of resource coordinators. The others did not involve program areas of PSP. Program Managers complained then and into early Year 2 that the

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*Support materials, Table PIIC-1.

**Table PIIC-2

PIIC spent too much time on administrative details and not enough on decisions about instructional program, and grumbled that they spent too much time in meetings and not enough on their individual responsibilities. Some felt that the meetings actually undermined their performance of these necessary tasks (PSP self-report*). Action taken to improve the situation included having meetings every two weeks rather than weekly, publishing a project administrative bulletin and generally reducing the amount of administrative detail brought into meetings.

Examination of observer records of meetings in the first two years suggests that while the PIIC made few formal decisions, they were concerned with resolving issues affecting program areas, as well as dealing with administrative concerns. Early issues included concerns about how the project budget would be allocated to schools; how to improve the functioning of school IICs so that they spent less time on mechanical details and more on instructional/curricular questions; and, of course, the thorny problem of the relative roles of program managers and resource coordinators. While such issues are not directly instructional, they clearly have much to do with instructional programs across schools and "problems affecting more than one school". As noted above, the role issue--which overlapped the issue of expenditure of federal cash for programs--was ultimately resolved by giving the program managers authority and the coordinators expertise power to advise the managers. In this and other ways, the PIIC may be seen to have functioned at least partially as intended, although it seemed not to make many formal decisions as such in meetings.

The curve of attention to more instruction-oriented agendas was judged by PSP to have been highest in the middle years of the project when agenda items frequently included planning for staff development, curriculum development, better allocation of resources for instructional materials and equipment, transference of PSP concepts to other schools in the district (PSP self-report, 1977). Years 2 and 3 saw the heaviest efforts in curriculum areas, Year 4 mounting attention to transfering concepts beyond PSP schools. Year 5 discussions focused heavily on phasing-out concerns.

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*PSP Final Report, Section 5, p. 18.

Continuity of the PIIC? Interviews with project personnel (program managers and people above school level) in the last two years of the project suggest that program managers--the core group of the PIIC, had become much more than a group of principals who participated in routine principals' meetings, but much less than a cohesive, integrated community of people. They did share in a fairly open way and expressed views, feelings, and opinions--in general, being readier (and perhaps more skilled) in debating issues of consequence and showing assertiveness than was common outside the project: "Program managers speak out more at district meetings than do other principals in other areas." (Comment of senior staff member confirmed by many similar comments.)

Yet little had been done to build them up as a group of people, a support community, an integrative element. They were to some extent competitive in ways that countered a collaborative model and they appeared to have little interpersonal contact with each other outside of the PIIC: "Program managers don't trust each other...they are not like the resource coordinators.... It is a competition group." (Comment of senior staff supported by other statements confirming the absence of relationships in informal settings.)

With the termination of the project, the PSP schools returned to the mainstream of area management in the district and their program managers to the larger group of principals involved in area and district meetings. The PIIC as it existed for the Project would be dissolved. Whether the area group, composed of a much larger set of school leaders (about 20 schools involved), would take on the characteristics of an area Instructional Improvement Committee or the old-style administrative principals' meetings would, we judge, depend upon the commitment and style of the new area superintendent--the PSP Director in Year 5 who had such commitment having decided to move out of state. The program managers, if they remained in the system would retain some of the skills, assertiveness and openness honed during project years; but, though they would have the camaraderie of shared history, we judge there would be only fragmentary team spirit. Here again, much would depend upon whether the new area superintendent was committed to PSP-style participative management and had the leadership ability to build some group cohesiveness.

## Other Project-level Committees

Project-level committees other than the PIIC were not a focus of external evaluation. One, called a Steering Committee, was composed of teachers from project schools and operated much as such a group would with an area superintendent (which the PSP director was). Another, the Curriculum Steering Committee had an important developmental role in the project. The members were project resource coordinators and the Manager of School Programs who chaired the meetings. (In Year 1 the leadership came from the Manager of Staff Support Services.)

The Curriculum Steering Committee had as its overall purpose: "to coordinate a well-articulated program in all curriculum areas, bringing their influence to bear on the instructional program". This purpose was translated into a formidable array of functions, including: maintaining awareness about K-12 program; identifying in-service needs in curriculum and instruction; analyzing Level I evaluation reports on on-site programs and processes; developing a process for detailed curriculum development in each area, meshing individual disciplines into a "meaningful interdisciplinary model"; and generally helping to implement the PSP curricular design in a wide range of ways.

This group, like that of program managers, fell short of becoming cohesive and of achieving its integrative goals at the level aspired to. Difficulties enountered included the conflict and competition between coordinators and managers, discussed above.

> There was little criticism of the performance of individual consultants [by program managers], but the notion of pooling them together for collective influence in this nebulously defined situation was viewed as a threat by some administrative personnel in individual schools. (PSP, Final Report, Sn. 5, p. 21)

The role conflict was resolved in ways that diminished the coordinators' sense of efficacy and caused some continuing frustration. They were to be consultants, with the "authority of expertise" to advise, but not the authority to assure that their advice was sought or implemented. Added to that, were the diverse personalities, styles and disciplinary commitments of the coordinators themselves, with little commonality of interests save in working toward PSP goals of developing individualized programs in the various subject areas.

A third difficulty arose because of conflicting demands on their time. The intention that half the time would be spent in the schools working with staff was frustrated in certain periods by pressures to develop curriculum position statements and by the heavy toll of time taken by the Continuation Application. However, such activities as these did have the benefit of somewhat consolidating people who shared the stress of the pressure-cooker situation occasioned by the effort to meet Federal deadlines and assure continuity of the project.

Given these difficulties, it is probably remarkable that the resource coodinators operated at the level of effectiveness that they did. They developed position papers in every curricular area and translated new individualized programs in core areas into the schools, were valued, sought out, and increasingly a pervasive force in staff development--both in formal workshops and within the schools. Yet they were not melded into the cohesive group that could have increased the integration of program; and there was little evidence of any priority being given in leadership to strengthen the relationships between program managers and key support services of evaluators and resource coordinators, and among all three groups.

Finally, we should mention the "Management Team"--not shown in the formal organizational charts, but perceived as influential by major actors in the project in the last two years of PSP. The group was "informal" in the sense that it did not appear on the formal organizational blueprint, but was formalized in the sense that it had established members and regular meetings. In Year 4 it consisted of the Manager of School Programs, the Executive Director, the Coordinator of Transference, and the Coordinator of Staff Development. This group was referred to only half-facetiously as "The Big Four" and was perceived outside the group (by others at central staff and program manager level) as having "power" and "making decisions". The members of the group itself did not perceive it thus:

> People probably think we are a very powerful group but we aren't. Most decisions people say are made by the management team are made by the Executive Director and some other person; e.g., the personnel man or the Business Manager.... I think the PMs are a lot more powerful though they don't think so. They exert more influence on the program.... To tell the truth I don't know who really made most of the decisions in the project. It was not the management team. It is more of an advisory group... (Member of Management Team, Years 4-5)

The Executive Director for Year Five confirmed: "The Management Team is not a decision-making body. It was not structured that way and does not function like that." And he proceeded to offer what we judge to be an accurate appraisal of the nature of shared decision-making at Project level:

> One of the places that the problem *[= misunderstanding]* lies is in the shared decision-making label given to us in the project. I think it means that there is an interactive process that is much more open and positive than perhaps some of the other structures happen to be. This is reflected in the way these people speak out in general sessions at district level. I think sometimes this may be misunderstood as not being part of a team. In reality, they are doing what they have been taught to do. That is, to examine the issue, raise questions about it. Hopefully, then the best decisions can be made about it. (PSP Dir., Year 5, 6-77)

"Do PSP people speak out more than their counterparts in the district?" "There's no doubt about it!"

## F. CONTINUITY?

PSP made genuine attempts to introduce a more open, participative climate into the decision-making process at all levels--with students in their learning programs, teachers in learning communities, and various committees at school and project level. Teachers did experience an increase in power to influence decisions--heavily at learning community level, and in significant degree at school level.

None of the various committees filled the high ideal of policy making and decision-making except sporadically; but they did offer significant opportunities to debate, to influence the resolution of issues, and to feel a measure of "ownership" of some decisions. Although not all role groups in the project were convinced that the best possible decisions were made, the final PSP summation noted that no single role group dominated the decision process and that "decisions were the best to be derived from the collective wisdom". Furthermore, the wide range of forums available for expressing concerns and offering suggestions provided opportunities for building skills in problem solving and issue analysis, and for practicing assertiveness in the give-and-take of group discussion.

While some form of the expanded structural arrangements and increase in decision-making skills might be expected to persist beyond the life of the project, formal and informal constraints on participative management and decision making are strong. The degrees of freedom available at the beginning of a venture to make new decisions and introduce changes tend to become systematically eroded over time as budgetary and other resources become committed. The constraints of prior decisions are further subject to external demands--influences of Federal and district-level requirements as well as procedures determining such details as textbooks, record-keeping and other operational details. Arenas for decision-making tend to become reduced and thus provide less opportunity for affecting policy and practice. In addition, at an informal level, people engaged in a unique enterprise which encouraged openness of expression, may experience difficulty functioning in a mainstream environment where learned behaviors may be perceived by others as aggressive or threatening.

The problems of re-entry suggest that indicators of continuity may be indirect and subtle rather than direct and overt in area and district arenas of management and decision-making. Within PSP schools, there seemed a strong likelihood that -- short of radical change in building leadership -- the patterns of participative management described in this chapter would be maintained.

# CHAPTER SIX

# COMMUNITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SATISFACTION

## A. PSP INTENTIONS

PSP's commitment to increased community involvement in the schools is specified in the original Proposal (March 1972) in these broad terms:

> "To involve actively students, parents, community groups, and professional educators, through Educational Cooperatives, in a continuing process of deciding the purposes of education in an evolving society, in suggesting concrete ways to achieve those purposes, in recommending policy governing education to the Board of Trustees, and in providing feedback and grass roots evaluation relating to local education." (Proposal/Plan, 1972, p. 16)

In the Continuation Application (1975), this "original objective" was expressed in a set of "restated objectives", thus:

> -Process Objective 1: To improve the quantity and quality of involvement of the lay community in the decision-making process.
>
> -Process Objective 2: To improve the quantity and quality of involvement of the professional community in the decision-making process.
>
> -Process Objective 3: By May 1977, to increase to 50 percent the percentage of the lay community who perceive the discipline in Piedmont Schools Project schools as having improved during the life of the project as compared with 31 percent in 1974.
>
> (Continuation Application 1975, p. 6)

Beyond the commitment to involving the community in decision-making processes, the early documents convey a pervasive concern with reducing barriers between school and community, with making the community a school, and with assuring community involvement in schooling. On the latter, there was a desire "to inform and actively involve parents and other community persons in school activities and programs to promote appreciation, understanding and support of the philosophy, organization and educational processes involved in the Piedmont Schools Project."

To involve citizens in the decision-making process, the PSP created two new formal structures. The Board of Cooperatives was to be the major vehicle for "lay community" involvement in decision-making; and the Board of Directors (subsequently renamed The Professional Liaison Committee), the mechanism for "professional community" involvement. Involvement in general (as distinct from involvement in decision making processes) was to be further reached through the home-school communication strategies in each school, the information and communication programs of the Project Communications Specialist, and in some measure by the work of other project-level staff, notably the Community Agent.

We consider first, in turn, The Board of Directors and The Board of Cooperatives. Then we examine indicators of community/parental knowledge of and satisfaction with PSP schools, to suggest the extent of effectiveness of strategies adopted to inform and involve the community.

## B. INVOLVING THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY THROUGH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS/PROFESSIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

### Intentions

The initial PSP proposal called for the establishment of a Board of Directors to review overall progress of the project, to offer suggestions, and to respond to concerns of the Educational Cooperatives and the Piedmont Schools staff. Through monthly meetings, the Board was to formulate broad policy directives, although such policy suggestions were subject to veto by the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees of Greenville County School District. The design for the Board of Directors reflected the assumption that "significant change cannot take place in education until the social and political forces of local, State, and Federal agencies, and teacher training institutions can find new and more effective ways of working together--thus bringing their collective influence to bear on educational problems." (PSP proposal, March 1972, p. 21). Initial membership included one representative from each of the following organizations: The Board of Trustees of the School District of

Greenville County, the South Carolina State Department of Education, Furman University, the Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce, and a public service agency, with the PSP Director serving as Executive Secretary.

## Implementation

> *FINDING: Because of lack of a sense of purpose and absence of decision- or policy-making authority, the Board of Directors failed as a participatory structure and was dissolved by the end of the third year of the Project.*

Flaws in the Board of Directors appear in structure, composition, and function. There are indications that, had it been left to the discretion of the Project's organizers, there would have been no Board of Directors at all. One representative went so far as to credit the three-year survival of the Board to external pressure: "It was one of those things that the folks in Washington had as a requirement." Because the ties binding members were essentially academic, they had few direct interests to motivate them and not even a common geographic base to unite them.

Interviews in Years 4 and 5 reflect a range of views on problems encountered by the Board. The Superintendent of Schools observed: "The trouble with the Board of Directors was that they spent more time talking about what they should be doing, as opposed to doing something." Members themselves pinpointed the problem of lack of assigned responsibility: "It was a policy-making board with no policy-making authority," and "In all that time, about the only decision we ever really made was the project school calendar.... I'm not suggesting we were ever stifled from doing anything. I'm just saying we didn't ever have any real responsibility." The university representative added further detail to confirm this view:

> *[The State Department of Education representative]* X and I seemed the only ones with any real knowledge of the project. We felt sorry for the lay representatives on the Board. They felt a civic responsibility to be there, but they had no idea of what their role was to be, of what was going on, and they had to endure those dialogues between X and me. I also felt throughout that, unlike the lay people, X and I had a means of carrying on a relationship with the project and exerting influence

> independently of the Board. That's where I think I made a real contribution.... We weren't the real policy making group. Everybody [referring to project administrators] said why waste time with this group when we ought really to be pleasing the group down at Cleveland Street [the district office]. That's being blunt about it, but it's my feeling. I was willing to spend some time responding to things, but we weren't given the opportunity. We weren't going to be held accountable. We had no real responsibility."

## The Professional Liaison Committee

The experimental structure for professional participation disbanded at the end of Year 3 to be replaced by a Professional Liaison Committee which the Continuation Proposal intimated would serve similar purposes: to ensure the involvement of local, State, and Federal agencies and teacher training institutions. The composition of the group, however, was changed to include representatives from the South Carolina State Department of Education, Furman University, the Board of Trustees of the School District of Greenville County; the Superintendent of the School District of Greenville County; and the Executive Director of PSP. Two project staff members who maintained communication with the representatives from Furman University and the South Carolina State Department of Education also served on the PLC. A hint of reduced expectations was also present: "The idea being explored is whether this group of professionals can bring their expertise and influence to bear collectively on decisions which will improve education for children in the project school." (Continuation Application, pp. 34-5)

> *FINDING: The Professional Liaison Committee failed for the same reasons that its predecessor, the Board of Directors, was disbanded: fuzzy definition of purpose, no real authority or decision-making power, participant realization of relative powerlessness, and absence of abiding ties to the project.*

The new group met quarterly rather than monthly in meetings that appeared to be largely pro forma events to meet the project's commitment to NIE. Field notes for Year 4 describe the sparsely-attended final meeting of the year consisting of a 10-minute slide-show on data which had been collected and disseminated to the public and within PSP groups. The session reflected typical meetings in which information on some aspect of the project, such as

Transference or Student Achievement, was presented for comment. Noting the character of the meetings as a formality, one participant noted: "But at least we're only meeting quarterly now instead of once a month. Not as great a waste of time as before." The representative of the State Department of Education who had not attended a single meeting in Year 4 identified points of influence outside the formal meeting structure:

> The real input comes not from these quarterly meetings...it's the informal things...while I haven't been that active, I have been on the phone.... That's the advantage of it--not in the meetings but in the close working relations.... If I go back to the original stage [of PSP], I probably had more input in the beginning than now. The program managers and facilitators of operations concept. That was mine. I mean I picked it up elsewhere, but I was the one who brought it in. The IGE program basically was from my perspective. The Cooperatives Board itself was an input I made, and wouldn't have had an opportunity to make otherwise. [SDE, rep., 8-76]

These comments highlight the opportunities for input at the initiation of a new venture rather than after an operation is established and the discrepancy between informal and timely professional input and formal but irrelevant official meetings.

## Continuity

The structure of the Board of Directors and the Professional Liaison Committee was superfluous for the decision making pertinent to PSP internal operations. The composition of the group was dysfunctional: members from outside the Greenville County School District had no clear stake in the project--institutional, professional or personal. Given the fact that the functions assigned to the group related to PSP rather than to the implications of the project for the institutions they represented, the structures disappeared at the close of PSP leaving no formal or informal mechanisms for continued effort to translate the experience for other institutions, organizations, or professionals.

## C. INVOLVING THE LAY COMMUNITY THROUGH THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVES

### Intentions

"Educational Cooperatives," said PSP planners, "are groups of citizens, organized or loosely structured, with a high degree of interest in the educational program of the Greer Community." The groups were organized as cooperatives during the planning process when PSP planners made a major effort to involve "students, parents, community groups and professional educators" in "deciding the purposes of education in an evolving society." This organization of cooperatives was "founded on the belief that educational progress will occur when members of the community are informed and have influence on the policies and goals of the educational system." (Continuation Application, p. 11). The cooperatives were intended to continue "to function as a vital element in the project" largely channeling their input through the Board of Cooperatives (BOC)*. The Continuation Application elaborates BOC functions thus:

> The Cooperatives are generally designed to involve citizens in communicating with the schools, in reviewing the purpose of education and the goals of the project and in advising school personnel of local education matters. Specific duties and purposes defined for the cooperatives are to advise the superintendent and the Board of Trustees of the School District of Greenville County through the Educational Cooperatives Board on the purpose, goals and objectives of the Piedmont Schools Project; to suggest broad directives concerning policy with respect to the Piedmont Schools Project to the superintendent and through him to the Board of Trustees...and to question programs or policies which are in effect; to provide a mechanism for evaluative feedback to the school administration and the Board of Trustees concerning the educational program being provided by the project; to provide a means for disseminating information concerning the school program to a large segment of the community; and to assist the professional staff in an advisory capacity through ad hoc committees on curriculum and general policy. (Cont. App., p. 12)

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*For a good discussion of the BOC, see: Joseph Mercurio, Community Involvement in Cooperative Decision-making: Some Lessons Learned", Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Vol. 1, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1979. The article offers a more extended account of the history of Board, illustrated with telling quotes from field interviews.

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The overall judgment on the BOC, based on investigation during the external evaluation process is that the Board did not fulfill the ambitious objectives set forth in PSP plans, although examination of the implementation process is instructive.

> *OVERALL JUDGMENT: The Board of Cooperatives functioned only to a limited degree as a vehicle for lay community involvement in PSP. It was not representative of the community, for reasons largely outside the control of the PSP, and it was not widely known and utilized by the community at large as a channel for inputs to PSP policies and decisions.*
>
> *It did function well as a listening and, increasingly, as a questioning body; and, in its assumption of responsibility for some tasks, it was an active body. It "kept the project honest", sensitive to community concerns, and was one of several thermostats indicating the temper of a limited but vocal segment of public opinion.*

### Board Membership and Community Representation

Thirteen different community organizations were involved with the PSP through the Board of Cooperatives over the life of the Project, including:

Greer Chamber of Commerce
PTA Cooperative
Student Cooperative
Teachers' Cooperative
Ministers' Cooperative
Civic/Fraternal Cooperative
Garden Clubs Council
Church Lay Groups Cooperative
Farmers' Cooperative
Industrial Production Workers Cooperative
Black Concerned Citizens
Educational Interest Groups
Community Clubs Cooperative

These individual cooperatives each selected a representative to the parent Board of Cooperatives. BOC members, in turn, elected their own officers. The Board met monthly with the Executive Director and various staff members of the PSP, during the five years of the Project.

Patterns of attendance at Board meetings over the years show the emergence of three groups after PSP implementation had begun, and the demise by midway through the Project of three other groups.* Groups in the category of declining participation were: Industrial Production Workers (no representation

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*Support Materials, Table BOC-1.

after Year 3), Farmers Cooperative and Black Concerned Citizens. These specially formed cooperatives represented three fairly populous, but generally less affluent and less formally educated segments of the community. Contrast the three cooperatives which sought and obtained representation on the Board midway through PSP Year 1. These were: Church Lay Groups, Community Clubs, and Educational Interest Group Cooperatives. Although they did not draw from "ready made" constituencies, these groups maintained both high and stable attendance throughout the project. They tended to include relatively more affluent and more formally educated segments of the community.

The patterns suggested by analysis of attendance over five years and of socio-economic characteristics of Board members in Year 4 and Year 5 support this judgment.

> *JUDGMENT: Citizen interest and involvement in the Board of Cooperatives, over the five years of PSP was a function of (1) the extent to which individual cooperatives were already part of an independent organized body, and (2) socio-economic characteristics of the members.**

Discounting the student representative, who was headed for college anyway, in Year 4 seven of the eight representatives of the BOC were college graduates; and in Year 5 all eight had a college education, six of them in the post-graduate category. The comparable figures from the Year 4 Community Survey were 17 percent with college education in the community-at-large sample, and 10 percent in the parents' sample. Moreover, if we estimate socio-economic standing from an approximation of the character and quality of residential area, most of the Years 4 and 5 representatives lived in areas rated at highest socio-economic level (upper-middle income, professional, all white).**

It was not the case that the farming, mill worker and black segments of the population were not welcome to attend or to be represented in proportion to their numbers. Indeed, the current membership decried their absence. But the plain fact of the matter is that they did not attend and had not been in regular attendance -- depending on the specific group -- for anywhere from two to four years. Thus, the Cooperatives Board clearly represented parts of the community better than others, and some parts not at all.

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*Support Materials, Tables BOC-1, BOC-2.

**The way these socio-economic areas in the community were determined is described in EPRC Report on The New Instructional Environment in Year 4 (1976) and the areas are represented by shadings on maps in that report.

Several factors tended to impede the Board's realization of representative membership, not the least of which was (1) retaining the interest of the less affluent, less educated segments of the community in a level of activity that was viewed by them as either irrelevant to their immediate interests or beyond their understanding, and (2) the difficulty of drawing from the unorganized ranks of the mill worker, black and farming segments of the community.

> *JUDGMENT: The Cooperatives Board, in short, was largely upper middle class, because the style, level and character of BOC activities were consistent with, and came to be dominated by, the upper-middle-class orientation of its membership.*

In its desire to be representative of community concerns the Cooperatives Board operated against still another handicap: *The vast majority of the community was unaware of its very existence.* Of the 210 citizens constituting the community-at-large sample of the 1976 (Year 4) Community Survey, only 29 percent claimed to have even heard of the Board. Of the 238 parents questioned separately on this same survey, only 36 percent indicated they had heard of the Board. And most of these indicated a basic lack of acquaintance with the Board's purposes and functions. The 1977 Parent Survey showed a slight improvement in this respect, with the level of parent awareness of the Board's existence rising to 41 percent (n=346).

Thus, the concerns brought to the attention of the Board came from a limited segment of the community, to the degree that they came at all. It is plausible that they came mainly from individual representatives' colleagues peers, friends, and neighbors.

## The Nature of BOC Involvement in the PSP

PSP's self-report on the Cooperatives system during the first two years of the project suggests that it was no easy task to sustain interest and action through the Cooperatives. The judgment in the Continuation Application was that effectiveness was variable. Pre-existing, formally organized groups were thought to function best, while others were "not fully operational" and did not have a regular meeting schedule. The writers cite a BOC member thus: "Even though they didn't seem productive at the time, the early meetings gave a number of people an opportunity to get a lot of things off their chests," to which PSP adds the comment, "This was good and it helped lead to better and more open communication between parents and the administration." The document then proceeds to elaborate a large array of "projected activities" designed to improve the effectiveness of the Cooperatives and the BOC.* The most striking feature of these is the extent to which responsibility for involving citizens was being heavily shouldered by the PSP as compared with the Board and its constituent cooperatives.

This impression of low pressure from the community to become involved, and large initiatives falling to the local school system (=PSP) to get the BOC and the cooperatives functioning less sluggishly to attract community involvement, was confirmed by observation and interview investigations in Years 4 and 5. BOC members were increasingly active; however, the intention that the cooperatives system through the BOC would be a mechanism for conveying community concerns to PSP and vice versa, was only partially realized.

> *FINDING: The BOC was able to only a limited extent to convey certain community concerns to PSP administration and to relay information about PSP to the grass roots community. The channels for attaining this objective were weak and did not reach intended effectiveness.*

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*See PSP, Continuation Application, 1975, p. 14

The topics addressed by the Cooperatives Board and the concerns expressed by its members over the course of the project were diverse, and they varied in the level of intensity with which they were raised and examined. A study of Year 4 Board meetings illustrates the type of content of discussion.*

Year 4 meetings and activities.** Items discussed may be grouped in four categories: PSP communications, community concerns, BOC activities, and procedural items. Members, additionally, had the opportunity at each meeting to report from their individual cooperatives. However, their relationship to their constituencies was somewhat tenuous in some cases, and in others more in the nature of information-giving than a two-way exchange. Thus inputs to the BOC from individual cooperatives by this reporting mechanism were minimal and sporadic.

The prevalence of PSP inputs to BOC meetings and agendas reflects the initiatives of PSP presaged in the Continuation Application (Year 3) and it suggests in some measure the nature and type of communication flow between project administration and the Board--more often information flowing from PSP to BOC than an interchange involving major input to PSP from the Board. While some PSP presentations generated little and others somewhat more discussion, recorded observations suggest little in the way of extended or heated exchange over "burning issues".

As Year 4 progressed, more of the Board's agenda items fell in the community concerns and BOC activities category. A state senator attended one meeting to clarify plans for reapportionment of the Greenville County School Board, and at another the Board discussed the realignment of areas within the school district. However, records show no further pursuit of these questions by the BOC and no evidence to suggest that their discussions had any influence upon district policies.

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*The study by Joseph Mercurio drew upon field notes, recorded observations of meetings, and review of BOC minutes.

**Support Materials, Table BOC-3.

As to activities (action as distinct from discussion) in Year 4, these were associated with the Year 4 Community Survey and the organization of a spring "Town Meeting". Board members were involved in various stages of the Survey from design, to training, to household interviewing, to sharing "results" and for some this represented considerable investment of time and effort. Similar involvement occurred in Year 5's Parent Survey which was primarily an initiative of external evaluators in cooperation with the internal evaluation team. In each case, the survey was presented to the community as the Board's survey and they felt considerable "cwnership" of it.

The Town Meeting was organized by a small subcommittee of the Board and focused on the recurring topic of "discipline in the schools", certainly an "issue" area. However, it is clear that the topic and a related survey (administered to some community members and project personnel) were promoted primarily by one very active member of the Board, based on the judgment that "discipline seemed a selling point" for the Town Meeting. In fact, audience attendance was far below expectations and the "discipline survey" antagonized some PSP personnel who expressed irritation at its negative thrust. The meeting was dominated by data-laden presentations made by a "platform" panel and there was an absence of any real interchange between audience and PSP representatives other than in a short and curtailed question session at the close of the meeting. (Field notes)

Analysis of BOC minutes over five years (a total of 54 meetings) was undertaken as part of the effort to determine specifically what the Board did and what, if any, impact it had on PSP administration thinking. Contents of Minutes were analyzed by:

- -Category of item (related to BOC; to PSP; to Schools; to Community; to the School District)
- -Initiator/presenter of item (PSP director; PSP staff member, BOC member; others)

-Decision level (low, medium, high significance/impact*)

-Information flow (PSP presentation to BOC; information requested of PSP by BOC; individual Cooperative reports; BOC Study/Committee reports; specific requests for information by individual cooperatives)

-BOC impact on PSP (items from PSP for BOC consideration/action; BOC policy recommendations to PSP or District; PSP or District adoption of BOC recommendations)

Analysis of the recorded occurrences by category and type support these findings:*

> *FINDING: (1) Board members were concerned most with matters closest to "home", namely, their own functioning and organization, and PSP/school-related concerns. Concerns related to the community generally or, for that matter, the District did not enter prominently into the picture.*

> *FINDING: (2) The Board was increasingly used as a forum for discussion between its representatives and the PSP staff. Members were exposed to a variety of presentations, whether at their own request or otherwise.*

The three consecutive PSP directors presented around a quarter of the items recorded and PSP staff members were increasingly involved in presentations over the years of the Project. While a larger proportion of items was initiated by Board members over time, observations at meetings in Years 4 and 5 suggest caution in equating quantity with quality or impact. Some of the PSP staff's appearances may have been at the Board's request; if so, this is masked by the minutes. Few requests for information from the Board to PSP are recorded over the years.

> *FINDING: (3) The majority of the Board's "decisions" were essentially routine and of low impact. The five decisions judged to have relatively high potential impact involved implementing two town meetings, two community surveys, and one parent survey.*

Given the quality and character of the large majority of specific decisions recorded, it cannot be said that any of them appreciably affected either the operation of the PSP or the thinking of Project administration. Some might doubt the actual effects of the five decisions over the course of the Project, judged by the evaluation team to have had a relatively high potential impact on PSP. The Town Meetings were not heavily attended and did not appear to generate much involvement of the community in discussion or debate. The community and parent surveys, however, did reach out through face-to-face household administration to systematic samples of the Greer population and the results were utilized by staff at Project and school levels.

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*See Table BOC-5, Support Materials, for frequencies of occurrence and explanation of the decision-level categories.

> *FINDING: (4) The Board was, on balance, more a "listening" body than a questioning body. It kept interested and potentially more influential citizens of the community informed of the Project's activities. On the other hand representatives' reports were, at best, only minimally expressive of the concerns of the constituent Cooperatives.*

The Minutes record 152 instances in which information (announcements, presentations) passed from Project to Board as against only 34 recorded instances in which information was requested by PSP or Board members. Presentation of reports from constituent cooperatives was sporadic (averaging slightly over two per meeting over time); in many cases, there were no reports. "The BOC representatives thus appeared to be left mainly to their own devices in respect to the character and quality of their participation in the Board, suggesting that links between the parent board and constituent boards were, at best tenuous, at worst non-existent. The BOC reps thus stood as something of an in-group unto themselves" (Evaluator's report).

> *FINDING: (5) The BOC did not function as a policy-making organ of the Project. It had minimal impact on PSP operation or administration thinking beyond keeping the Project "honest" by asking questions.*

Minutes of BOC meetings over five years yield a total of 28 instances in which the PSP referred to the Board for consideration or action and, by and large, the kinds of requests appearing in the record are perfunctory. Examples: a request for "Board members to provide Project staff with information about cooperatives' activities during Years 4 and 5" (Oct. 1974); a request for "the Board's reaction to a possible community meeting involving the Director of Experimental Schools Program, along with other dignitaries" (May, 1973).

Over the five years, the Board made a total of 11 officially recorded policy recommendations to the PSP. Examples: (1) that "the administration should report to the Board on any new multi-age grouping plans for 1974-5 (Feb. 1974); (2) that "in-service activities be planned to help teachers with the utilization of packets and other individualized materials" (Sept. 1974); (3) that "a Cooperatives Board Communications Committee be appointed to coordinate Board public relations" (Oct. 1975).

Although there are no recorded instances that any of the Board's policy recommendations were adopted, this is misleading. We know, for example, that a Board Communications Committee was established. And, it is evident from the increase over time in the number of presentations to the Board by PSP staff that PSP was increasingly sensitive to the desire of the Board to be kept informed of the kind of things that the Project was "up to".

Board members' assessments of effectiveness. Interviews with BOC members showed mixed estimations of the effectiveness of the Board. Typical comments: "I don't think it's as effective as it could and ought to be. But it's on the road to becoming very effective...if the schools and the people want it...." "It's better than what we had before. 'Cause before we had nothing!..." "The channel is there for everyone in Greer. But you have to face the fact that it's not being used...the weakness is that too many people don't know it exists. Part of that is apathy...a lack of interest in what's going on in Greer." (Interviews 11-75 and 5-76)

The tenor of comments in Year 4 interviews was optimistic--a sense that the Board had potential as an effective vehicle for community involvement in school policy areas. By the end of the project much of the optimism had evaporated. There were expressions of disappointment that the Board had not met its original objectives, repeated references to its unrepresentative makeup, doubts about its future viability. Asked about the BOC in what turned out to be the last month of its life, one member responded:

> "I guess my first feeling is I'm disappointed. I feel like overall, somehow, the makeup has varied so, particularly this year, where we have some members very willing and active, and some with no concept of the Board.... I don't think it's been representative of the community...." Asked if she felt the Board had made much impact on the project and on the

> thinking of PSP administration, she offered: "Probably not." (Why?) "Could be because of the changes [in representatives and staff]. Dr. B was the third director.... As for Dr. J [= district superintendent], his appearances at our Board meetings were very brief. It seemed when he needed us, like with the tax referendum, he'd be in a few minutes. Very seldom was he seeking our input." (Excerpt from interview 6-77)

The harsh realities of Year 5 included budgetary decisions of the Board of Trustees of the District (which had suffered defeat in a tax referendum) that meant the District would not be picking up costs of sustaining some elements of the PSP innovation in the Greer schools (paraprofessionals, for example). This occasioned much despondency and disenchantment in Greer. Yet, although Board members and PSP made submissions (Year 5) to the District soliciting support for continuing programs, there is no record that the BOC had any impact on district decisions either then or earlier in its history. In fact, the records do not attest that the BOC gave sustained attention to the objective of "recommending policy governing education to the Board of Trustees".

Nor do we find that the Board met other elements in the original statement of objectives. The "educational cooperatives" overall were judged by Board members and evaluators to be largely ineffective in meeting those objectives. Yet, the roots of difficulty lie perhaps more in the social history and environment than in the use of cooperatives and a cooperatives board as vehicles for community involvement in educational policy and action. Thus, one of the representatives to the Professional Liaison Committee of PSP commented:

> Whether the current structure [of boards] is a viable one for this particular community, I don't know. There does not seem to be the interest from the community, after setting up all these avenues for community involvement, that the community itself claims to have wanted in the first place. The story I get is you could never get the Coops to deal with anything substantive. But then I don't see how you can expect these mill workers in Greer to suddenly run down to the Project with a long list of what they think they need. ...I guess I've always wondered just how much

> honest feeling there is for a need for community participation. And yet, from what I've heard and seen, I'm not sure the Project people haven't made some honest efforts to make it happen. Maybe there comes a time when you just have to admit that something like that isn't working, and isn't going to work.
> (Excerpt from interview with PLC representative, October 2, 1975)

Continuity?

The core intention expressed in PSP plans for the Board of Cooperatives was that it should function as the prime mechanism for involving the lay community in the decision-making process. It was designed as the hub of a system of cooperatives which would focus educational concerns and involvement of broadly based "grass roots" segments of the Greer community. In essence, we conclude that (a) this did not happen, and (b) it was probably unrealistic to expect that it would. The Board was not significantly involved in the PSP decision-making process. It was not effective in influencing policy decisions of the Project or the district administration. It was, however, effective as a legitimated forum for debate--listening, questioning, "keeping the project honest", and sometimes reaching out into the community with information and genuine requests for input and feedback (as in the various surveys and town meetings).

Towards the end of PSP Year 4, changes were afoot in district structures for citizen participation in education concerns. In May 1976 the Board of Trustees approved a recommendation from the District's Citizens Advisory Committee that "...the plan for Citizens Advisory Committees in use since 1970 be discontinued in lieu of a new and different structure for greater efficiency to citizens of the community, the school administration and the Board of Trustees."

The new structures called for a Citizens Advisory Committee to each school in the District "to provide citizens of each school with meaningful participation and involvement in school/community affairs." In each area there would be a communications group composed of one member from each school council and the area group would meet at least twice a year with the Area Assistant Superintendent. Five representatives from each area group in the district would meet at least once a year with the District Superintendent.

The Superintendent volunteered (in interview with evaluators) that the idea for the change was partly influenced by the concept of the PSP Cooperatives Board. In essence, each school might be seen as having a cooperative, beginning with PSP Year 5, and representatives from the school committees would constitute a group somewhat like the BOC. The new structures were seen as rendering the PSP Board of Cooperatives redundant and it ceased to exist once the Project period ended.*

Notwithstanding our evaluation that the Board fell short of the intended levels of representation and influence on decisions and policies, we note that PSP area experience was considerable in public communications, school-community relations, and citizen and parental involvement in the schools. It seemed likely, therefore, that the new school- and area-level councils could build upon that experience. Moreover, prima facie, they had the merits of (a) being part of the mainstream of district involvement mechanisms (which BOC was not), and (b) making individual schools the locus of "grassroots" inputs to area and district forums of discussion (which the cooperatives did not). As we show below, citizen (particularly parental) knowledge, interest, and engagement in schooling are greater when focused on specific schools. Such local knowledge and involvement can become a more effective base for debate and action on education issues than opinions about schools in general.

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*Note that at the end of Year 5, PSP schools became part of a larger area group of around 20 schools, whose communities extended beyond the confines of Greer and the Greer community organizations which consituted the cooperatives system.

## D. KNOWLEDGE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH PSP SCHOOLS: INTENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Aside from the Cooperatives and the Board of Cooperatives as mechanisms for channeling community input to the decision-making process, PSP had a broader concern with extending and deepening relationships between schools and the community, particularly parents.

Problems in public relations and dissatisfaction with schools had been prevalent in the district before the advent of PSP. It was a time of some upheaval and dissension, particularly associated with desegregation compliance (see Chapter 1, Context). In 1972, the District Board of Trustees promulgated the following statement of general public relations policy.

> All personnel of The School District of Greenville County accept the responsibility of using every ethical approach in developing among the citizens of the community the greatest possible understanding and support for public education. The general public, as well as all professional personnel of the District, must have full access to information about the administration and operation of the schools if their involvement is to be meaningful, responsible, and useful. Believing that the quality of education is determined by public understanding and support and that effective communication requires the constant exchange of ideas, attitudes, and proposals, the District will use every possible means to encourage interaction with the public in providing the best educational program for every student in Greenville County. (GCSD Board of Trustees, Statement of Public Relations Policy, 1972)

During the PSP planning phase, citizen groups had urged attention to "improving communications between all members of the educational community." They identified several problems in the area of home-school relations. They thought that communication between administrators, teachers, parents and students were poor; that the schools were not sufficiently accountable to the community; that the community was not sufficiently involved in the learning process. And, as elsewhere, there was considerable citizen concern about "discipline". (It is perhaps an indicator of the level of concern with discipline that the only specific objective stated and assessed by PSP on community/parental satisfaction related to improving perceptions of discipline in the schools.*) Note that all of these concerns were raised before any changes were introduced in the schools by the Project. Given the highly innovative nature of the environment and practices introduced by PSP into Greer area schools, the PSP faced a particularly strong challenge in translating the district commitment to "developing among the citizens of the community the greatest possible understanding and support for public education."

What were the strategies and tactics used by PSP to improve knowledge of PSP among community members and involve them more in the schools? As part of implementing the Instructional Process Model, the schools had responsibilities for home-school communication; and in the Staffing Model there were two positions with specific responsibilities in the community relations area--the Community Agent and the Communications Specialist.

The Continuation Application (1975) details a variety of methods used to promote home-school communication, including:

-Telephone contacts, letters to parents, news releases, open houses, coffees, teas.

-Programs initiated by the BOC.

-High school expansion of out-of-school learning program.

-Bringing parents into meetings of the IIC and learning community teams.

-Active PTA and Parent Advisory Councils (representatives from the latter for each school constituted the Educational Interests Cooperative).

-Involvement of paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, and other community members in the schools.

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*This was Product Objective #8: "By May 1977 to increase to 50 percent the percentage of the lay community who perceive the discipline in the PSP as having improved during the life of the project as compared with 31 percent in 1974." The objective was not met--a PSP judgment based on responses to a single question in the 1974 and 1976 surveys. (See PSP Final Report, Sn. 21, pp. 16-17)

- Advisor roles--particularly in middle and high schools and especially through the mechanism of parent-teacher-student conferences.
- Community Agent role--e.g., re students with special needs, acting as ombudsman, dealing with conflict situations, coordinating community resources.

Through the Dissemination Program, organized by the Communications Specialist of PSP, information about the Project was spread by various means in Greer, in Greenville County and, to some degree, to State and nation. Local community activity included producing and showing numerous audio-visual programs; producing, printing and disseminating publications on the Project (including newsletters, brochures, and a publication called The Open Line which was mailed four times a year to 9,500 Greer area families); items in local newspapers and radio/TV stations. Moreover, the Project had a Communications Center which helped orient visitors to the project and its schools.*

Because the philosophy, organization and educational processes involved in PSP differed considerably from traditional schooling (as found in Greer schools before the Project and within the personal history of community members), the task of informing and involving and communicating with parents and community members assumed particular importance.

Assessing effectiveness. Was the PSP effective in its efforts to improve parent/community knowledge of and satisfaction with the PSP schools--and particularly the new instructional environment? The primary sources of data to answer these questions are two sample surveys conducted in the spring of Year 4 and Year 5 (1976 and 1977), supplemented by interviews with parents, community members and PSP staff. The prime source of data on parental involvement, knowledgeability and satisfaction by the end of the project is the Year 5 survey, with secondary support for findings and judgments coming from interview records and Year 4 survey data.*

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*See PSP Final Report, Section 16 (Dissemination) and Section 9, pp. 13-16 (Home-School Communication in the Process Model) for further information on PSP strategies.

## E. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE

> *OVERALL FINDING: Involvement in decision-making processes was very low; involvement in more general, largely non-decisional areas was substantial.*

### Involvement in Decision-Making

Survey data confirm the low level of involvement in the Board of Cooperatives. The great majority of Greer citizens (though parents scored better than non-parents in every respect) neither participated in, nor availed themselves of, nor were much aware of the purposes of the Board. More than half of those surveyed had never heard of it (five questions Year 4 survey; ten questions Year 5 survey).

At school level, with parents responding based on their relations with particular schools in which they had children, again the level of involvement in broad policy and decision areas was minimal, though the data are illuminating. Asked in Year 5 about whether they wanted to be involved in specific decision areas, the majority indicated that they did want to be involved in decisions affecting: what should happen in their child's school once PSP is finished; zoning patterns affecting the school their child attends; and the subjects that their child gets to study. On the other hand, the majority preferred to leave to school staff questions of: choice of textbooks, the way the school is run, the evaluation of teacher competence, the nature of the report card system, and the way the child is taught the three R's. However, a sizable minority of parents in each case would like to participate in meetings involving decisions in those areas. There was an even split on desire for involvement in meetings about discipline policy (half would like to be involved; half would leave this to the school staff).*

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*Detailed accounts of the Year 4 survey methodology and analyses were provided to NIE in EPRC's report on The New Instructional Environment Year 4, Ch. 6. Instruments and design notes are in NIE files. In brief: The surveys differed in response groups, overall focus, degree of specificity and utility of data. The 1976 survey used a parent sample and a community-at-large sample, and asked a set of general questions about schools in general. It had the advantage of comparability with some 1974 survey information, but it was not judged particularly helpful to the BOC (which co-sponsored it) or the schools; and it was not incisive for external evaluation purposes. The 1977 Survey, in contrast, concentrated on parents, offered multiple indicators for specific components of PSP, and required respondent judgments to be based upon experience with a specific school, rather than with schools in general. Both surveys were administered by household interviews.

The large majority (over 90 percent in each case) said they had neither been invited to nor, in fact, had attended any meetings affecting any of these broad policy or decision areas. Most teachers, on the same set of issues, felt that parents should have "some" though not "a lot" of influence; that the influence parents do have in these areas is less than they should have;** and that (aside from 'discipline' and 'choice of subjects') there had not been much increase in parent influence on decision-making during the period of PSP.

Field records in Years 4 and 5 suggest that there was no push on the part of parents to become more involved in the decision-making process--probably, we judge, because it had not been the norm for this to be the case historically and because PSP adopted a genuine open-door policy which allowed individual concerns to be dealt with responsively (see below). Asked a summative question in Year 5 about how much they felt they could influence the way their child's school is run, 71 percent of parents smapled (n=386), said they had 'some' or 'quite a bit' of influence, as against 20 percent who felt they had 'little or no' influence (with no notable differences across schools).

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*Support Materials, Table P-9.
**Support Materials, Table P-13.

*FINDING: Parental involvement, conceived as input into broad decision-making processes, whether generally or at school level, was minimal, but we judge that this was not a matter engendering much heat.*

The general picture from available records is that, given an initial community/parental say on the goals and concerns of education during the PSP planning period, the translation of those goals into specifics and the strategies used to address them were left to the professionals. While Year 5 data suggest that parents would like somewhat more influence and involvement in decisions than they have, there was little evidence of parental or citizen clamor to storm the gates of decision-making in schools or district; nor of PSP interpreting "parental involvement" in terms of the broad decision-making process.

## Involvement in School Activities

The picture is much improved when we look at parental involvement in general school activities--for example, PTA meetings, teacher-parent conferences, open houses, etc. There was substantial outreach on the part of PSP schools and responsiveness from parents. Invitations opened the way to such less-traditional activities as parents visiting the school during the school day to see at first hand how their child was being taught; and over a third of parents sampled had done such in-school observing. More than half said they had been invited to and had accepted invitations to talk with teachers, attend PTA meetings, and attend open houses.* As devices for helping parents become informed about schooling, the majority of parents favored talking with a teacher, visiting the school in session to learn about how their child is taught, talking with the Program Manager, and attending an open house--in that order.**

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*Support Materials, Table P-14.

**Support Materials, Table P-16.

Of the various general communication strategies that the PSP schools and Communications Specialist used to inform citizens and parents, those found most helpful by parents were clearly the ones offering the most immediate information about their own child's school performance (e.g., parent-teacher conferences). The more distant the contact the less helpful it was perceived to be. However, over a quarter of the parents rated the radio station and local newspaper as "very helpful" and another quarter as "somewhat helpful" ways for schools to inform parents, reflecting a much higher than normal prevalence of school-specific items in the local media. Student word-of-mouth, incidently, was rated as "very helpful" by only 25 percent of the parents and nine percent of teachers.**

That parents felt welcome to visit the schools is affirmed in several sources. In Year 4, 82 percent of parents sampled (n=240) felt it was either definitely or probably true that "citizens feel welcome to visit their schools; and only two teachers (n=168) said that parents were "not very welcome", with 15 more suggesting "parents are not interested enough to come".

Field records of interviews with staff and citizens/parents suggest a pervasive practical application of PSP's "philosophy of openness". From top to bottom, PSP staff wanted parents to feel welcome to visit their schools, to feel a part of the PSP. Some brief excerpts suggest the flavor of comments.

> -"They do feel welcome here. I've told them, you don't even have to call. Just come and the teacher will talk to you as soon as she's free, or I'll take her class so she can talk to you, or I'll be glad to talk to you myself..." (Program Manager, School B, 1-76)
>
> -"I've always felt parents were the most interested people in the world. Here they're given the opportunity. In other schools I've taught in, it used to give us the shudders if a parent came by. Here, I couldn't care if Dr. J (Superintendent) walked through the room. (Teacher, School A, 3-76)

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*Support Materials, Table P-16.

**Support Materials, Tables P-17, P-18.

> -"We had a bicentennial lunch a little while ago, and we had so many parents come in that Mrs...., in charge of the cafeteria said: 'I don't know if I want to do that again'. That would not have happened five years ago." (Teacher, School C, 11-75)

And, typical of parent commentary:

> -"One of the things I've appreciated about the project is that parents as well as the community can feel free to go into the school and observe. More so now than in the past. I feel welcome. I think our community as a whole has felt this..." (Mother, 11-75)

The sincerity of this open door policy did bring about more quantitative and qualitative involvement of parents. Yet field records suggest that there were impediments to involving some parents even at the low level of getting them just to visit the school; in particular, despite the efforts to make people feel welcome, the school setting was perceived by some as an alien and even intimidating environment.*

It was apparent, however, that parents generally felt welcome to go into their schools, whether simply to become more aware of the kinds of things going on there, or to bring a problem, a question, or a suggestion to the attention of staff. Those who did this, very largely felt that the staff were responsive.** Only ten percent of those sampled said they had not been in their child's school during Year 5, 36 percent had been there more than five times, and 41 percent two to five times, percentages being higher at elementary than secondary levels. In terms of direct personal contact between teachers and parents, staff data indicate that there was much less of this at Middle School than any other school--with over a third of the Middle School teachers stating that they had direct contact with less than a quarter of their students' parents in Year 5.***

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*This is a general statement about schools and not about PSP. PSP did much better than most to make people welcome. Yet there were still those who felt uncomfortable in schools who talked more freely about their children and education in more "homey" environments. (Field notes)

**Support Materials, Table P-19.

***Support Materials, Tables P-21, P-22.

*OVERALL JUDGMENT: There was substantial quantitative and qualitative involvement of PSP parents with individual schools. The more personal and the closer the nature of the communication to "my child" concerns, the more effective it was perceived to be; thus, both parents and teachers rated teacher-parent conferences as the most effective mechanism for informing parents about their child's education. All the outreach strategies adopted by PSP, however, were found to be at least "somewhat helpful" by the majority of parents. And the PSP did implement a genuine and pervasive "open door" policy which made parents, generally, feel welcome (if not always 'at home') in the schools.*

### Parent Knowledge of the PSP Instructional Environment

Responses to four general items in the Year 4 Community Survey suggested that although parents considered they knew more than non-parents about PSP, only one-fifth of all parents felt they knew "a lot" about the project; half felt they had more than just a little information, leaving about a third uninformed or knowing very little. In general, as might be expected, teachers and students were cited as the main source of information for parents, with friends, neighbors and school staff most frequently identified as the primary sources of information for non-parents. Only slightly more than half the parents and slightly less than half the non-parents felt they were getting enough information about the PSP--despite considerable efforts to communicate PSP to the public, and particularly to parents.*

In Year 5, questions focused on parent experience with specific schools and in a survey section entitled "Educational Practices in the Greer Public Schools", parents were required to identify, for 11 different components of innovation in the instructional environment, which of two descriptions (one "traditional", one "open") most closely described the situation in the school that year. The eleven sets of descriptions (for elementary and middle schools) dealt with:

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*Support Materials, Table P-23.

1. Furniture arrangement
2. Class size
3. Multiple-grading
4. Individualized texts/materials
5. Paraprofessionals
6. Team teaching
7. Student grouping (4 modes)
8. Individual pacing of learning
9. Student choice of materials/activities
10. Self-directed learning
11. Related Arts paraprofessionals

Responses to these questions showed a generally high level of parental knowledge of the character of the PSP instructional environment at the elementary and middle school levels.* A sizable majority identified the "correct" descriptors (i.e., those reflecting PSP intended practice) in all but two items (both on student vs. teacher-directed learning) which are worth a short comment. Asked whether in their child's school 'Students work some of the time most days without adults directing their activities' or 'Teachers direct student learning at all times', 41 percent chose the first description, 44 percent the second. There was a similar split on whether: 'Students can choose their learning activities some of the time most days' or 'Teachers choose all the materials and activities for students'. The split in parent perceptions of practice in their children's schools may, in part, reflect the variable degree of learner autonomy in learning communities, given the more teacher-directed type of individualization in some major program areas. In part, too, both the perceptions and the actual practice reflect a parental and teacher bias, noted elsewhere, toward feeling that teachers should have control of learning and behavior.

Parents in the high school sample were asked a similar type of question, using descriptors that dealt with six aspects of the high school instructional delivery system, viz:

1. Advisee groups
2. Short course system
3. On-the-job vocational education
4. Small group study projects
5. Study halls
6. Who chooses courses of study

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*Support Materials, Table P-24.

Survey results attest that high school parents, also, were largely knowledgeable about instructional practices in their children's school.* For only two of the eight schools were the percentages of 'don't know' responses of parents sizable: Elementary School F and the Middle School (23% and 21% composite 'don't know' scores over eleven items):

> *JUDGMENT: Parents appeared to know a good deal about specific features of the PSP instructional system and practices at all levels of schooling (survey data). We judge that their level of knowledge was much higher than would be true of schools generally and that this was attributable to the extent of direct parental exposure to the schools and to PSP-generated information--plus the interest one might expect in schooling by parents when something new and different is being tried out with their children.*

Whatever combination of PSP strategies and parental interest and initiative may account for the good level of knowledge of most aspects of the PSP environment, parent expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction which we will discuss next, were based on reasonably sound knowledge base and hence we are inclined to place greater faith in their legitimacy.

## F. PARENT SATISFACTION WITH PSP SCHOOLS

### Satisfaction with Major Features of the Instructional Environment

Using the same sets of descriptors as were employed to check parent knowledgeability of the new instructional environment, parents were asked in Year 5 which practice they would prefer in each case, if they were given the choice. In each set, the choice was between an "open" or innovative practice and a traditional practice. The results show a general positive disposition to PSP instructional environment and practices, with some noteworthy patterns appearing when we look at the picture by school and by item. Tables 9 and 10 offer a summary overview.

Overall, the majority of parents show a preference for the PSP-style instructional environment over the traditional; but they convey across the board a majority preference for teachers assuming full responsibility for directing student learning at all times. The majority would prefer not to have "students work some of the time most days without adults directing their

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*Support Materials, Table P-26.

TABLE 3: MAJORITY PREFERENCE OF ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS FOR PSP (O) vs. TRADITIONAL (T) INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT PSP YEAR 5. (n=280)

| Focus of Item (abbreviated) | Schools<br>A | B | C | D | E | F | G<br>Mid | Majority Preference | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Flexible furniture and use of space | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | (7/7) |
| 2. Double or larger vs. single size 'class' settings | O | O | T | T | T | T | T | T | (5/7) |
| 3. Multi-grading vs. single grading | O | O | T | O | O/T | T | T* | O/T | (50/50) |
| 4. Individualized texts and materials | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | (7/7) |
| 5. Use of paraprofessionals in instruction | O | O | T | T | O | O | T | O | (4/7) |
| 6. Team teaching vs. single teacher | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | (7/7) |
| 7. Four learning modes vs. mostly single group | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | (7/7) |
| 8. Individually paced learning/instruction | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | (7/7) |
| 9. Some student vs. all teacher choice of materials/activities | O | O | T | T | T | T | T | T | (4/7) |
| 10. Some self-directed vs. all teacher-directed learning | T | T | T | T | T | T | T | T | (7/7) |
| 11. Related Arts daily by paras vs. weekly from specialists * | O | O | T | O/T | T | O | (T)* | O | (3.5/6) |
| Majority preference by school over 11 practices | O | O | T | O | O | O | O/T | PSP | (5.5/7) |
| | 10/11 | 10/11 | 6/11 | 7.5/11 | 6.5/11 | 7/11 | 5/10 | PSP/Open<br>7/11 | |

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*Note: Middle School had instruction from certified specialists throughout and thus did not have exposure to the innovative practice of using paraprofessionals. And Middle School did not practice multi-grading, though there is a future possibility.

TABLE 4: MAJORITY PREFERENCE OF HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS FOR PSP (O) vs. TRADITIONAL (T) INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES - PSP YEAR 5. (n=65. Percentages rounded)

| Item (relating to) | Preference O vs. T % |
|---|---|
| 1. Advisee system | O (89% to 6%) |
| 2. Short course system | O (52% to 40%) |
| 3. On-the-job vocational education | O (64% to 29%) |
| 4. Student group initiated projects with advisors | O (65% to 25%) |
| 5. Study halls | T (52% to 43%) |
| 6. Student choice involved in what courses are offered | O (89% to 6%) |

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activities" (Item #10, elementary/middle); and would prefer not to have "students choose their learning activities some of the time most days" (Item #9, elementary/middle). Thus, according to these indicators, the majority tended not to favor the devolution of "programmatic authority" when it reached down as far as letting students (or even paraprofessionals in the view of some) have more authority and responsibility in relation to learning choices. However, we note that in this area of control/freedom, while the majority opt for more control, sizable minorities favor the more open practices (30% to 41% of all elementary and middle school parent respondents).

A school-by-school examination shows that five of the six elementary school parent groups expressed a majority preference for PSP (open) vs. traditional (T) instructional approaches, with School A and B parents most strongly supportive. School C parents come out with a majority against the use of paraprofessionals in Related Arts (#11) or instruction (#5), reinforcing the pattern of parents in the School C community wanting certified professional teachers to direct all learning. Middle School data show a similar pattern.

> *FINDING: Parents of children in PSP schools generally indicated a relatively high level of knowledge and acceptance of most broad aspects of the changes that occurred in their children's instructional environment in PSP schools. At the same time most conveyed a preference for teachers to direct learning activity at all times.*

We turn now to some further data on specific aspects of parental satisfaction/dissatisfaction to fill in this broad picture.

## Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of PSP Schools

Parents were asked (Year 5), for each of 26 items, to rate their school (very good, OK, not very good, don't know). The data allow us to identify the areas of greatest satisfaction and those of least satisfaction by the end of the Project.* The top eight satisfaction areas were as follows. (Percents of the 346 parents rating the item 'very good' are noted in parentheses).

1. What the school does to make parents feel welcome to visit (64%)
2. That students enjoy going to school (57%)
3. The quality of equipment and facilities inside the school (53%)
4. The way the program manager runs the school (52%)
5. That students are interested in school (49%)
6. The quality of the school building (48%)
7. Improving the daily rate of student attendance (44%)
8. The kind of textbooks used (44%)

Parents thus seemed to be saying that the schools had made both students and parents attracted to them; that they were pleased with the quality of the physical plant--inside and out; and that they were happy with the manner in which the program manager ran things. The general picture of satisfaction with school climate is supported by interview data conveying that parents felt their schools were doing a very good job of making schooling attractive to students. The following quotations from two parents and one non-parent are illustrative:

> -When I see children going to school and enjoying going, and I think of the years I grew up when we utterly hated school, that says something. I think they're much happier children on the whole. (Mother, interviewed 11-75)
>
> -Now, did you notice when you came up this street (black neighborhood) you didn't see any children on the street here. This is not because of pressure from parents to go to school. They want to go to school. Before the project, you could see kids everywhere, any hour of the day. But you don't see that any more. Don't see a child nowhere. (Father, interviewed 11-75)

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*See Support Materials, Table P-30. Parents were regarded as being most satisfied about a particular item if the item had a "very good" rating from at least 40% parents and no more than a 10% "not very good" rating. Parents were viewed as least satisfied with a particular item if less than 40% gave it a "very good" rating and more than 10% gave it a "not very good" rating.

> -I think the project has come along. I'm really impressed... kids more optimistic, show more pride, show more interest. This year especially, I have never [before] seen kids say willingly, 'I'll be glad when school opens.' This tells me that something has to be going on. (Clothing store operator interviewed, 11-75)

What were parents least satisfied with? In the set of 26 areas which were rated, the top eight dissatisfaction areas were as follows. (Percentages of the 346 parents rating the school "not very good" are in parentheses.)

1. That your child's class is about the right size for learning (23% neg.)
2. The state of discipline in the school (20% neg.)
3. The number of textbooks available for use by each child (19% neg.)
4. Teacher control over activities in the classroom (19% neg.)
5. The way students behave toward their teachers (17% neg.)
6. The way the school deals with student misbehavior (16% neg.)
7. The way black and white students get along together (12% neg.)
8. The way students behave toward one another in the school (11% neg.)

In every case, the majority responses were positive (30%-39% rating the item 'very good'; 53%-76% rating it either 'very good' or 'OK'), though these are items where a significant minority of parents were dissatisfied. The striking feature is that six of the eight items with which parents were least satisfied were specifically discipline related. This is not surprising on two counts. First, 1976 and 1974 Community Surveys indicated a similar level of dissatisfaction with discipline and student behavior in Greer schools.* Secondly, "lack of discipline" had topped the list of major problems facing the public schools of the nation for the eighth time in the nine years up to 1977 when PSP ended.**

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*The question format and sampling procedures were different, making strict comparison invalid. The 1976 data are reported and interpreted in EPRC Final Report on the New Instructional Environment in Year 4 (1976), Ch. VI.

**Ninth Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools (1977). "Discipline" was still the top problem in polls through 1979.

*FINDING: While parents of PSP school children in Year 5 were clearly more satisfied with some aspects of the instructional environment than others, survey results on the whole convey a fairly high level of satisfaction overall. Moreover, of those able to compare the environment in Year 5 with that before PSP (Year 0), the majority rated multiple aspects of the schools as "better now". Overall, most parents were decidedly positive in their estimations of the effects of PSP.*

Comparison with pre-PSP. The data comparing PSP Year 5 to pre-PSP confirm the overall positive feelings of parents to project schools. Many felt they could not make the comparison for the particular schools they were appraising (28%-56% "don't knows" by item of the 346 sampled).* Of those who did make a judgment, those saying "worse now" were a distinct minority, and more parents felt things were "better now" than said they were "about the same". Hence a positive picture. Most improved** aspects of Greer schooling since PSP were as follows. (Percents of total sample saying "better now" are in parentheses.)

-The quality of equipment and facilities inside the school (42%)
-That students are interested in school (36%)
-Teaching to meet the needs of each individual student (36%)
-How students are taught reading, writing, and math (36%)
-That students enjoy going to school (35%)

Least improved** aspects of Greer schooling since PSP (percents of total sample saying "worse now"):

-Teacher control over activities in the classroom (15% neg.)
-The way students behave toward their teachers (13% neg.)
-The state of discipline in the school (13% neg.)
-The way the school controls student behavior (12% neg.)
-That your child's class is about the right size for learning (12% neg.)
-The number of textbooks available for use by each child (10% neg.)

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*Support Materials, Table P-31. Some respondents did not live in the area pre-PSP. Some did not have direct pre-PSP experience with the particular school they were asked to appraise and felt they did not know the school well enough at the time to offer a comparative judgment.

**Most improved areas = items with at least 35% parents saying "better now" and less than 10% saying "worse now". Least improved areas = items with no more than 30% parents saying "better now" and 10% or more saying "worse now".

We note again the relatively low percentages of negative judgments and the disciplinary focus of the items that attracted them. It is worth emphasizing that among the most improved aspects of Greer schooling, according to parents, were: student interest in and enjoyment of schooling; individualized instruction; and the teaching of the three R's.

### Satisfaction and "The Basics"

What is "Basic"? A focus on the "basics" as PSP parents viewed them was an important component of satisfaction assessment. The "Back to Basics" movement was in full swing nationally by the end of PSP. And in Greer, too, Year 4 field notes suggested, there were parents who shared concern about "basics". "I've visited the Middle School," said one mother, "It's too casual. I'm pretty traditional, but they ought to have more of the old reading, writing and arithmetic. What worries me is they're not getting anything..." (Interview, 1-76). "Getting anything" was often associated in interviewee comments with a return to schooling of earlier years, heavily laced with law and order. Critical comments were peppered with phrases like "structured classrooms", "obedience", "good manners", "politeness", "respect for elders", "respect for teachers". Thus "basic" referred not just to cognition but to behavior and was allied with concern about "discipline".

While the war cry "Back to Basics" was being sounded abroad and its echoes heard in Greenville County, the PSP continued to promote the importance of the whole child--with the affective and psycho-motor domains and not just the cognitive seen in the PSP vision as "basic". The holistic view was a reflection of the goals and objectives established by community involvement. Still, with the change in climate (tightened pursestrings and "Back to Basics"), it seemed important to probe what parents viewed as "absolutely essential" (basic) to their child's education in Year 5.

Parents were asked to rate each of the 14 major subjects/areas in which the schools were involved as "absolutely essential", or "nice to have but not absolutely essential" or "not really necessary" (with the further option of "don't know").

above. Note, however, that unfavorable ratings are given by a small minority of respondents (3% to 11% by item). Taken with data on dissatisfaction with behavior and discipline, the possibility emerges that parents may judge a school as doing a "very good" or "OK" job in an area such as "responsible social behavior" (90% said so) and still be dissatisfied with student behavior (48% thought it was worse than when the parent was in school - see below).

## Additional Indicators of Parent Satisfaction

To round out the questions asked in the Year 5 survey, most of which were rather specific and detailed, we asked parents for some broad judgments at the end of each household interview. Topics included: how hard children work; how PSP schools compared with those parents attended; whether parents would prefer their child to attend a different school and, if so, why; whether the overall effects of PSP were for better or for worse; and what they would like to see happen in their child's school next year (i.e., post-PSP). The findings offer the last set of indicators of parental satisfaction.

> Question: Do you think your child is made to work too hard/not hard enough/about the right amount at X school? Question: Do you think your child gets too much/not enough/about the right amount of homework?
>
> *FINDING: Most parents (61%) felt their child had to work "about the right amount" and most (53%) felt that their child had "about the right amount" of homework. However, one third of the parents thought that their children were not made to work hard enough (33%), and did not get enough homework (35%).*

In talks with some parents over the course of PSP Years 4 and 5, they at times conveyed that they had worked harder and that things were better at the school they went to as a child. In an effort to solicit judgments rather than nostalgia, parents surveyed were asked to compare their child's school with the one they attended as a child on (a) teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, (b) students learning reading, writing and arithmetic, and (c) student behavior.

*FINDING: Parents mostly felt that teaching as well as learning of the three R's compared more than favorably with the school they had attended as a child, although around a quarter (22% teaching, 25% learning) thought they were worse. Most judged student behavior to be worse (48%), although one-fifth (20%) thought it was better.***

The patterns of response varied by school. School B parents clearly judged things overall as better in their child's school than in the one they had attended, even in the controversial area of student behavior.** On the other hand, 65% of Middle School parents surveyed said that student behavior was "worse now" than when they were in school; and, as we shall see, this feeling was reflected in the broad judgments they recorded about the school in response to the remaining questions.

> Question: If you had the choice, would you prefer to have your child attend a different school?
>
> *FINDING: The large majority (79%) said "no" they would not prefer to send their child to a different school. A significant minority (19%) would like to be able to make that change, and a somewhat smaller proportion (12%) gave as the reason, "unhappy with the kind of education child presently is getting at X School".*****

Once more, school-by-school data show that indicators of dissatisfaction are variable, with Middle School again standing out as a focus of discontent: a quarter of the parents surveyed for Middle School said they would prefer to have their child attend a different school because they were unhappy with education at the school. Thus, no matter what the levels of satisfaction with specifics of instruction or environment, a sizable group of parents would move their children out of Greer Middle School if they had the choice--begging, of course, the issue of whether any other middle schools would be "better".****

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*Support Materials, Table P-46.

**Support Materials, Table P-47

***Support Materials, Table P-49

****Writer's hunch is that junior high and middle schools might tend to attract the greatest disenchantment indicators wherever the schools are located. The hunch is based in part upon the perception that the young adolescent age group presents to both schools and parents the greatest challenge--associated with the complexities of that developmental stage in life.

Finally, two very general but telling questions about PSP as a whole.

First, Question: In general, do you feel the Piedmont Schools Project has made a difference in the quality of education in the Greer Public Schools for the better, for the worse, or that the Project has not made much difference one way or the other?

*Response: (n=346)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *PSP made a difference for the better* | *53%* | *(pro)* |
| *PSP made a difference for the worse* | *19%* | *(con)* |
| *PSP did not make much difference either way* | *8%* | |
| *(Don't know)* | *(18%)* | |

Discounting those who felt they could not make the comparison, the large majority said that PSP had made a positive difference; yet once again we note a minority of about one-fifth of the surveyed parents whose judgment was negative.*

Second, Question: "What would you like to see happen at X School when the Piedmont Schools Project ends this May?"

*Response: (n=346) I would like:*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *1. To have school remain just as it is now* | *18%* | |
| *2. A few changes, but mostly as it is now* | *46%* | *64% (pro)* |
| *3. A lot of changes, so it operates more like a traditional school* | *22%* | |
| *4. Return completely to a traditional style operation* | *8%* | *30% (con)* |

*5. Don't know/no opinion - 6%*

Responses by school confirm the pattern of other data: the most highly positive to the PSP instructional environment and delivery system are parents of School B (87%), School A (83%) and High School (73%)--though we note that physically the High School was a traditional plant. The most negative are Middle School (49% pro, 43% con) and School F (44% pro, 39% con).**

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*Support Materials, Table P-50).

**Support Materials, Table P-51).

*GENERAL FINDING: On balance, more parents from each of the eight schools lean more towards than away from the PSP school instructional environment and delivery system, with individual school parent groups lying on a continuum from heavily favorable to the innovation (A and B), to reasonably favorable (by margins of two and three to one), to split into sizable factions preferring PSP or traditional (Middle and F).*

## G. CONTINUITY

The design for PSP called for parent involvement in both decision making and in more traditional instruction-related activities. Throughout the five years of the project, parent participation in policy decisions or discussions about schooling was negligible. This situation was consonant with established community norms: while parents indicated that they felt they should have general influence at school and community-wide levels, they preferred in many situations to leave decisions affecting education in general to the school staff. Data on other types of involvement, however, present a picture of substantial participation in staff-parent conferences, PTA meetings, and response to the open-doors policies of the schools. There is clear evidence that PSP schools exerted much effort, successfully, to make parents feel welcome in the schools, including some types of direct involvement in settings of active instruction.

This success in creating a climate of openness in the schools established a pattern of relationships considered likely to continue. Furthermore, to the degree that PSP parents become involved in district initiatives to promote multi-citizen advisory councils, they will bring a range of experiences pertinent for strengthening communication and interaction between home and school, and between community and district.

Perhaps more important, however, is the evidence of the high level of parent satisfaction with the new type of instructional environment introduced by PSP. The indicators of parent satisfaction with the performance of schools in eleven basic subjects/areas and the perceptions that schooling was more enjoyable and interesting for Greer school children are clear. Despite some ambivalences about discipline, parents generally appeard to understand and support the changes. This new level of parent knowledge and expectations suggested that conditions for sustaining the spirit and the style of the changes were present at the end of the Project, and would continue--given some degree of continuity in in-school operations.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## BEYOND PSP: OUTCOMES, TRANSFERENCE, CLOSING THE BOOKS

### General Note

Chapter Seven was written by DR. MIRIAM CLASBY, based upon review of: (a) Level II Evaluation Substudy Report on Cognitive and Affective Achievement (Millman, 1978); (b) Level II Substudy Report on The Process and Effects of Transference (Kaplan, 1978); available records on the close-out of the Project, including relevant excerpts from PSP documents and Level II interview and survey data.

The many issues involved in outcomes evaluation, Transference, and phasing out of Federal support cannot be fully addressed within the confines of the present document, though there exists an array of information which speaks to them from PSP experience. This chapter seeks to give readers some general answers to the questions: "What about the test scores?", "How did the Transference Program work out?" and "What was the situation when Federal funding stopped?"

## A. INTRODUCTION

A richly-financed five-year effort to implement a program for comrehensive change in a set of eight schools could reasonably be expected to generate outcomes beyond the life of the Project itself--outcomes emerging from the intentions for the enterprise. After reviewing the intended outcomes for PSP and summarizing evidence on "product outcomes", this chapter examines data on formal efforts to "spread the word" and to institutionalize PSP concepts in selected schools. The final section reviews conditions and activities influencing the continuity of PSP commitments in Greenville County School District.

## B. OUTCOMES

### Intentions

During the initial planning for PSP, organizers worked with a group of Greer citizens to frame the overall goal of the Project*:

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*See Appendix 2, for the full statement of Goals and Objectives, 1972.

> To assist each child in the development of the resources needed to cope with life in a free and democratic society in such a way that he can participate in a useful and desirable capacity, appreciate his own role as well as the role of others, enjoy living, confidently meet the challenge of change, and willingly use his resources to do better than "just all right" in these endeavors. [PSP Proposal, 1972, p. 15]

Eleven sub-goals were identified by Greer citizens. Of these, nine emphasized human development--assisting students in knowing themselves, appreciating others, understanding freedom and its limitations, accepting responsibility for self and others, broadening ranges of experience, increasing awareness of the beauty and delicate balance of the physical world, developing creative talents, seeing education as a continuous process, imaginatively meeting the needs of the future. Two sub-goals fall within conventionally measured areas: learning basic skills of communication and mathematics and gaining a marketable skill or resources necessary for post-secondary education.

The initial design for PSP identified three distinct processes intended to assure a "truly individualized educational program: for students in Project schools. The decision-making process included arrangements for input from the lay community, the professional community, and the school community. The instructional process combined innovations in staffing patterns, classroom organization, management techniques, and instructional practices with programs in ten curricular areas. The evaluation process encompassed feedback on both process and product behavioral outcomes.

## Review of Process Outcomes

Both the initial Project emphasis on human development and the design emphasis on processes for restructuring an educational environment to improve the quality of life and learning in schools necessitated major attention to process outcomes. Preceding chapters have presented key findings on process outcomes associated with creating the new instructional environment (the major focus of evaluation), framed some judgments about successes and failures of specific components, and examined conditions supporting or constraining continuity. Some of the broad findings and judgments may be recalled here, in brief:

Implementation of the Learning Community concept in the schools (Ch. 3):

With some variations by level of schooling,

- *The physical environment of most schools was changed, becoming more open in structure and flexible in use.*
- *Staffing patterns and relationships were changed, involving some differentiation of function, teaming of teachers, and sharing of programmatic decision-making.*
- *Student relationships were changed, particularly through patterns created by large open-space communities, multi-aging/grading, regroupings for instruction, and mainstreaming.*
- *The orientation to individualization and personalization in the instructional process was translated in varying degrees through programs and processes, including attention to learning modes, learning cycle, learning centers, and a prevailing philosophy of "openness" and "success orientation".*

Staff Development (Ch. 4):

- *The PSP implemented a staff development process which, in general, had the planned characteristics of integration into Project life, individualization, continuity of exposure, and participatory planning. The quality of these characteristics varied over time. Nevertheless, staff development was a pervasive force in the Project, translated through formal activities and less formal relationships and follow-through among staff.*
- *The process focused heavily upon teachers, was weakest at the level of building administrators and quasi-non-existent at other staffing levels. The overall thrust and strategy presaged in the Plan were seriously weakened by the elimination of the specific leadership position for Staff Support Services at the end of Year 1, a situation that began to be remedied only in Year 4.*
- *The staff development process evolved over the life of PSP and, though it varied in strength over time and in quality across schools, overall it did provide crucial support for innovation and was highly acclaimed by staff.*

Participative Decision-Making in the School Community (Ch. 5):

- *PSP achieved its objective of "improving the quantity and quality of involvement of the school community in the decision-making process" and established a process wherein "the persons most closely affected by decisions have an influence in making the decisions." There was variation among schools and over time and problems were encountered, but the overall level of implementation of the objective was high.*

Community/Parental Involvement and Satisfaction* (Ch. 6)

- *The formal mechanism for professional community involvement (The Board of Directors/Professional Liaison Committee) was ineffective. It lacked sense of purpose and decision- or policy-making authority.*
- *The formal mechanism for lay community involvement (The Board of Cooperatives) was not widely known or utilized by the community at large as a channel for inputs to PSP policies and decisions. It did function well as a listening and questioning body; and, in its assumption of responsibility for some tasks (notably major surveys), it was an active body.*
- *There was substantial quantitative and qualitative involvement of PSP parents with individual schools, largely attributable to PSP "open doors" and communication policies. The more personal and the closer the nature of communication to "my child" concerns, the more effective it was perceived to be, by both parents and staff.*
- *The overwhelming majority of parents gave their schools a job performance rating on the teaching of eleven basic subjects/areas as either "very good" or "OK". Performance in the three R's was rated highest of all and they rated "How students are taught reading, writing and math" among the most improved aspects of Greer schooling.*
- *Overall, more parents from each school leaned towards the PSP environment than away from it, with individual school parent groups lying on a continuum from heavily favorable to the innovation (A, B, H), to reasonably favorable (margins of 2 and 3 to 1), to split into sizable factions (Middle and F).*

## Product Objectives

To examine product outcomes, it is necessary first to review eight product objectives established in 1975 (PSP Years 2-3) to measure product outcomes. Two of these objectives--to increase the mean learning rate of students in basic skill areas and to decrease the percentage of students in two lowest categories of achievement--focused on cognitive skills. Two of the objectives--to increase self-concept of students in lowest categories and to increase positive attitudes towards selected programs, procedures and personnel--were attitudinal. Three objectives used measures of increased attendance, decreased dropout, and disciplinary suspensions as indirect evidence of attitudinal change. The final product objective set a product outcome for public involvement by measuring the increase in positive public attitudes towards discipline in PSP schools.

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*Note that the indicators of community/parental satisfaction may be considered as related to process (creating a new and more favorable community environment for instruction) and as "product outcomes"--in the same sense that PSP identified a measure of public attitudes to discipline as "product objective".

> *JUDGMENT: Given the discrepancy between PSP intentions for students and the specification of product outcomes, the range and type of information generated for product evaluation provides very limited evidence of the degree of success or failure in realizing original PSP goals.*

This lack of fit is exacerbated by problems of instrumentation, data availability, and interpretation. Furthermore, data from various sources highlight ambiguity of the findings.

## Cognitive Outcomes

Although Level I and Level II evaluators differed in methodology and interpretation, they agreed that standardized test scores provided no evidence that the Project contributed incrementally in basic skill areas.

The PSP Final Report, Evaluation: Data and Interpretation, summarized findings on cognitive achievement for grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test administered between May of 1974 and May 1977.*

> The learning rates for the total population of PSP students did not show any persistent patterns of growth...PSP was successful in moving students from the very low achievement levels into the middle ranges of achievement, but many students who were in the very high ranges dropped in achievement into the middle ranges. Consequently, the mean achievement levels did not change appreciably. [PSP, P. 21]

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*The report displayed total scores in three categories: Reading Total (including vocabulary, reading comprehension, word study skills); Mathematics (including concepts, computation, applications); and English/Auditory (including spelling, language, and listening comprehension. ).

A Level II evaluation substudy report, Cognitive and Affective Achievement (Millman, 1978), provides a description and discussion of both the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) and California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and a review of problems related to the quality of the test data (which, for example, precluded the possibility of analysis by learning communities). The analysis of scores includes a comparison of PSP scores with non-PSP schools as well as an expectancy score analysis comparing actual test scores of elementary schools with scores expected on the basis of selected characteristics of the student population. The results reiterate the general tone of the Level I findings:

> *FINDING [based on analysis of SAT and CTBS data]: Cross-sectional, longitudinal and expectancy score analyses all gave the same result: there was no evidence that the Project incrementally contributed to student cognitive achievement.* [Millman, p. 38]

In discussing the appropriateness of the instrumentation, Millman identified three serious limitations of the CTBS and SAT tests in the PSP context: They do not match local instructional objectives; they sacrifice subject matter representativeness to obtain maximum discrimination (items that measure what schools emphasize most are often eliminated in favor of those which discriminate more among students); and they lack diagnostic capability (which limits the capacity of a school or district to take remedial action).

> *JUDGMENT: The use of CTBS and SAT as virtually the sole criterion to judge student outcomes of the PSP is considered to be a most serious flaw in the PSP evaluation design.* [Millman, p. 3]

In pointing to the mismatch between tests and local instructional objectives, he summarized data on student perceptions of the relevance of standardized tests. Student surveys in Years 4 and 5 asked students at elementary, middle and high school levels: "Do standardized tests [explanation given] ask questions about things you have been taught in school?" Students at all three levels of schooling responded similarly: usually over half of the students felt that most of the questions on standardized tests were not about things they had been taught in school. Moreover, only 32-46% of K-8 students in PSP schools (with one exception) thought that most of the test items referred to what had been taught, as compared with 54-66% in the comparison schools.

*FINDING: From the students' point of view, the content of the standardized tests only partially matches what is taught in school. Moreover, elementary and middle school students at PSP schools perceived a greater gap between the content of testing and teaching than their counterparts in non-PSP schools.* [Millman, p. 7]

Data from teacher and parent surveys underscore the difficulty of interpreting test score findings in the PSP context. When PSP teachers were asked (Year 4): "The standardized tests which my students take are a fair measure of the things I have taught them", 74% of all elementary teachers (93% in one school) responded "False"; 57% of middle and 40% of high school teachers responded "False"; and only 23% of the total PSP teacher population responded "True".* A more discriminating question in the Year 5 survey asked: "How well do standardized test results reflect student skills and learning in your learning community in Reading, Math, Social Studies, and Science?" In some subjects in some schools a good majority felt the test results reflected skills and learning "fairly well" (few said "very well"); but the percents of negative responses ("not well") are sizable with greatest dissatisfaction noted in Social Studies and Science.** As to parents, we have already noted that in Year 5 they registered a high degree of satisfaction with the teaching of basic subjects and with student learning in those areas; and they identified "how students are taught reading, writing, and math" among the most improved aspects of Greer schooling.

*FINDING: Teachers, like students, perceived a gap between what standardized tests measured and what they taught. In some schools, in some subjects (reading and math more often) they felt test results reflected skills "fairly well". And, test scores notwithstanding, parent data convey satisfaction with teaching of basic subjects and with student learning.*

Similar ambiguities emerge in discussing evidence related to affective outcomes.

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*See Support Materials, Table EV-1

**See Support Materials, Table EV-2

## Affective Outcomes

The original PSP objective most relevant to the affective data set was: "To provide experiences for students and teachers designed to promote positive attitudes toward self, learning, and positive relationships with others." This objective was rendered more specific by stating that for the last four years of the Project, the percentage of students giving positive responses to questions about self, school personnel, selected programs, and operating procedures would increase by an average of 5% a year.

> *FINDING: Changes in student affect from Project Years 2 and 3 to the final two years of the Project were as likely to be negative as positive. No consistent pattern was noted, although the High School seemed to emerge in a better light than the elementary schools. Scores on the test of self concept did show some gains, but they were seen as more modest than those implied in the Level I Final Report.* [Millman, p. 80]

Five instruments were used to measure affective outcomes and they yielded a range of information on student perceptions: The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale; the Locus of Control Scale; and three specially constructed survey questionnaires--Elementary (Form I), Elementary (Form II), and Secondary Survey.

Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale offers an assessment of pupils' self-reported perceptions of themselves and the Locus of Control Scale a measure of the degree to which students believe that events are caused by factors external to themselves. Both were administered during each of the five years of the Project. The PSP Final Report displayed findings longitudinally and interpreted the findings as showing great improvement in student self-concept. Because the longitudinal data captured responses of students at different stages of maturation and in different school settings, the Millman substudy displayed the data cross-sectionally for both Piers-Harris and Locus of Control Scales, comparing--not the same students at different grade levels, but sets of students in the same grade level two years apart. Changes were generally in a positive direction, although not so marked as presented in the PSP report. The Piers-Harris data showed differential gains among elementary schools, with School D registering dramatic increase and School F showing a loss over the two periods.

Elementary School Survey Form I had nine items and was administered in alternate years to second and third grade students in PSP schools only.

> *FINDING: The second and third graders appeared to find their learning community a very happy place, to like their teachers, to be satisfied with themselves as students, and to like who they are. Modest increases in positive affect were noted in several instances. [Millman, pp. 52-54, and Table 20]*

Elementary School Survey--Form II (10 items) and the Secondary School Survey were administered to grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 in Year 2 and Year 4, and to grades 5, 9, and 11 in Year 3 and 5. Comparable data were collected for non-PSP comparison schools in Years 4 and 5 only.

> *FINDINGS: [Millman, pp. 52-66, and Table 23]*
>
> - *The PSP objective of a 5% per annum improvement in student attitudes towards school in general was not met at elementary and middle school levels, but students gave roughly the same ratings as their contemporaries in non-PSP comparison schools. At the high school level, the situation improves dramatically, with students finding the school more interesting, better organized, more worthwhile, and so forth; and PSP High School was clearly more favorably perceived by its students than was the comparison school.*
> - *Data on student attitudes toward specific school subjects showed more positive responses for elementary grade compared with secondary, although reading enjoyed a more favorable response at secondary school level than other subjects. In 8 of 10 comparisons, PSP students rated the subjects as being more interesting than non-PSP students.*
> - *Items dealing with attitudes towards student control showed less positive ratings by elementary students at the end of the Project, but more positive ratings by High School students.*
> - *Data on attitudes toward school personnel showed that a majority of students felt positively about their teachers and program managers, and responses were relatively stable over time.*

Many items in the Elementary (Form II) and Secondary Surveys were targeted to special features of PSP and measure opinions about aspects of school over which the Project had control. However, analysis of the affective data is plagued by problems associated with some of the instruments used, incompleteness of data, and the fact that no baseline data exist for a pre-PSP comparison of student affect. And again, other information hints at complexities not addressed in the formal evaluation report.*

The Year 5 Teacher Survey solicited teacher perceptions of non-cognitive outcomes for students in Year 5 and as compared with the first two years of the Project.

> *FINDING: Teacher ratings of student self-esteem were positive at all levels, being greatest at elementary level in Year 5 (71% of teachers judged it "very good"). And 66% to 82% of teachers by level said Year 5 self-esteem was "better now" than in Years 1 and 2.*

Other Teacher Survey data indicate teacher perceptions that students gained in interactional capabilities. For example, responding to items on the amount of student-teacher interaction and students' ability to interact with teachers, between 63% and 80% of teachers by level judged Year 5 "better" than Years 1 and 2 with none making a negative comparison.

Additional indirect measures of student affect associated with PSP objectives for attendance, dropout, and suspensions, all showed positive change, but even these results are not clearcut:

> *JUDGMENTS: [Millman, pp. 76-78]*
>
> - *Improvement in attendance was difficult to achieve because all schools began averaging between 91% (for High School) and 93% (for elementary schools)--although High School attendance did improve by 2.5% over the life of the Project.*
> - *Interpretation of a decrease in the dropout rate is problematic because of changes in State attendance laws and changes in District procedures which altered the definition of dropout.*
> - *The decrease in number of suspensions at the elementary and middle schools has to be interpreted cautiously because of alternate explanations for the phenomenon related to changes in administrative practice.*

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*For example, the comparison schools had somewhat different population characteristics than those of PSP schools, and they included a school that was part of the PSP Transference Program and another with a history of innovation. There are, moreover, interview and further survey data which broaden the base for interpretation, while not eroding the careful analysis presented in the Millman report.

The final indicator included in the product measures was a measure of public perception of discipline in PSP schools between Year 2 and Year 5. An item included in Community Surveys administered to a stratified random sample of lay persons in the PSP attendance area in Year 2 and Year 4 indicated a decline in positive responses concerning discipline in elementary schools and no change in percentage of positive responses for middle or high school. These responses to a single item, however, should be compared with data on parent knowledge of and satisfaction with PSP reported in Chapter Six which affirmed a high level of satisfaction with PSP despite persistent concerns about discipline.

## C. THE TRANSFERENCE PROGRAM

The absence of clearcut statistical evidence of impact on student performance proved no deterrent to efforts to communicate information on the processes of change developed by PSP. A range of public information/relations activities, workshops and conferences were designed to disseminate information on the Project experience to professionals and the public at District, State and national levels. Two special dissemination conferences were conducted during the last year of PSP: a one-day "drive-in" for South Carolina School District administrators and a national three-day conference for out-of-state educators (drawing about 50 and 75 persons each). A more focused effort to introduce PSP to Greenville County schools was designated as the PSP Transference Program.

### Intentions

The original proposal to SOE for an Experimental Schools Project was generated within a school system committed to educational change and the Project itself was envisioned as a way to trigger such change. Intentions in this regard, however, were no more than a general statement in the original proposal/plan, expressed thus on the first page, in the context of describing the general setting for the PSP:

> The Piedmont Schools Project is an effort designed to bring about planned, systematic, and comprehensive change in the existing educational programs of the School District of

> Greenville County. A segment of the school district, the Greer area, has been selected for the testing of this design--a design which will be constantly evaluated and components of which will be adapted and translated into educational programs in the rest of the school district. [PSP Proposal, 1972, p. 1]

The document contains no further reference suggesting when or how the "translation" would occur, and we note that it refers to "components" being adapted and translated, and not to the comprehensive change which was "the PSP innovation" being diffused.

The whole of the planning process for PSP and at least the first two years of PSP implementation focused only upon the Greer schools, with deliberate efforts to constrain the amount and type of visiting from other District schools. This policy established the image of the PSP schools as a "living laboratory for testing new structures, relationships, methods, and curricula" (p. 103), as Project personnel concentrated energies on implementing complex and demanding change. Thus, systematic diffusion was not an integral part of the original PSP design. Rather, it was an understanding, a general expression of intent, until some features of the situation by Year 3 impelled detailed planning of what became known as the "Transference Program".

Pressures to spell out a commitment for the spread of innovative practice and to design and implement a plan of action came from inside and outside the District. During the painful and protracted negotiation resulting in the Continuation Application (which took months of time and physical and emotional energy to complete), NIE pressed hard for a program design for sharing the innovation. At the same time, there were convergent pressures and stimulus within the District. One element in the situation was some discontent and jealousy outside Greer over the relative riches and privileges of PSP schools and the notion that somehow these should be shared. More positively, during Project Year 2 the District's Board of Trustees adopted a set of 16 goals as a basis for comprehensive educational improvement. Every school in the District was required to design and/or implement programs which would better meet individual needs as well as District commitments.

In the context of the District's policies on individualization and educational improvement, PSP was intended to play "a vital role in overall educational renewal". As expressed in the Continuation Application, the intentions were as follows:

> 1. Most importantly, approximately one-third of the schools in the District will become directly involved in transference of the Piedmont Schools model by Year 5.
> 2. Other schools will submit written proposals to the district administration for alternative methods of educational improvement. PSP representatives will be involved in review of proposals and make recommendations as appropriate to ensure comprehensive rather than piecemeal improvement.
> 3. Other schools will develop extensive inservice plans for improving staff competencies and instructional outcomes. The PSP staff will not only participate in the review of these plans but also serve as resource consultants in the implementation process.
>
> In summary, the Piedmont Schools Project will influence all avenues of educational renewal in the District with the most direct impact coming through transference activities.... [Continuation Application, 1975, p. 204]

The Transference Program was thus viewed as the cornerstone of PSP involvement in district-wide agendas to improve educational practice.

## Strategy Design

The process of diffused implementation of PSP concepts and practices began during the third year of PSP. The District and PSP devised a plan to involve 34 (approximately one-third) of the system's non-PSP schools in the Transference Program during the final three years of the Project. The design involved four phases: Selection, Information, Implementation, and Continuation--the last three each taking one year.

The Selection Phase described in the original plan laid out a procedure for selecting "transference schools" for each of the three years, a different set being selected each year. As a first step in the process, the total faculty of each nominated school would vote on whether the school should be included in the Transference Program. Schools consenting to participate in this way were then to be ranked by PSP and District administrators on the basis of the following criteria:

- evidence of good community interest in the school;
- evidence of prior utilization of resources available to schools;
- willingness to consider moving toward an "open" philosophy of education;
- quality of instructional and administrative staff; and
- condition and design of the physical facility.

Once selected, school personnel were to participate in a one-year Information Phase designed to familiarize them with the PSP model and its implications for educational change. After this exposure, school staffs would then vote on whether to continue as pilot schools or to withdraw from the program. Those choosing to remain in the program were offered a two-year cycle of activities: the Implementation Phase included activities to facilitate actual adoption of PSP components, while the final year Continuation Phase emphasized on-going support for implementing selected concepts and practices in the individual schools.

Transference activities. A major decision was made at the outset which substantially affected the character and effectiveness of the Transference Program. It was determined that the Transference Program would restrict itself to aspects of PSP that could be replicated with little or no direct financial cost to the District or the transference schools. Very small amounts of Federal and local funds were allocated for direct support to transference schools implementing PSP concepts or practices. (The total amount of PSP funds spent for the transference component was $243,000, or 3.9% of the total $6.2 million granted to the District by the Federal government. Those funds were spent primarily on substitute teachers' pay, stipends, materials, and equipment.)

Consequently, the Transference Program's emphasis was confined to the demonstration and replication of the following ten "low cost" concepts or practices from the PSP.

## Figure 11

## COMPONENTS OF PSP INCLUDED IN THE TRANSFERENCE PROGRAM

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- Instructional Improvement Committee: A committee composed of the principal, the learning community coordinators and sometimes other key persons in the school which meets on a regular basis to make decisions regarding instructional matters related to more than one learning community.
- Team planning: Two or more teachers meet regularly to share ideas and jointly plan a learning program for students.
- Learning communities: Learning environments where two or more teachers share the responsibility of planning and implementing the learning program of individualized instruction.
- Facility/furniture/space redeployment: Changing the physical qualities of the learning environment in order to facilitate a program of individualized instruction.
- Learning modes: A set of four ways of grouping students for instruction to facilitate their achievement of learning objectives: a) a large group for presentation of material, b) small group for discussion or to teach a specific skill, c) one-to-one (student-to-student, student-to-paraprofessional, student-to-teacher, student-to-volunteer) used primarily for follow-up instruction or for student research, and d) independent work.
- Learning centers: Designated resource areas intended for the enrichment or extension of previously introduced concepts which are organized around a specified objective and contain materials and/or equipment which students can use independently.
- Learning cycles: A four-step process which helps teachers move students through the learning program in a way that considers every individual. The four steps include: a) establishing specific learning objectives, b) pre-assessing to determine objectives already mastered, c) providing a variety of activities to achieve the objectives, and d) post-assessing to determine the amount of learning which took place.
- Success orientation practices: Capitalizing on student strengths, offering students opportunities that ensure progress rather than continual failure, helping students assume responsibility for their own behavior and learning, emphasis on human development and positive self-concept for students and teachers.
- Student involvement: Giving students opportunities in keeping with their ability and maturity: a) to be involved in determining their learning objectives and learning activities, and b) to influence, when appropriate, decisions regarding the operation of the school.
- Community involvement: Keeping members of the community informed of and actively involved in influencing the policies and goals of the educational system.

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Those aspects of PSP not included in the Program (primarily because of cost factors) involved specialized roles: facilitator of operations, resource coordinators, and paraprofessionals. Because of District plans to develop local School Advisory Councils, the PSP structure for the Educational Cooperatives Board was also largely ignored.* The ten components, however, encompassed key features of the PSP instructional environment including priorities for personalization/individualization of instruction and for participatory decision-making within the schools.

Implementation of Transference-Participation

Selection and voting. The process for selecting the ten schools to participate in the initial year of transference activities deviated from the original plan: schools which had responded to the District program for school improvement by producing strong plans were identified as participating pilot schools. The first selection process, therfore, differed significantly from the voluntary process implemented with the second and third pilot groups. This variation takes on additional meaning in light of the plan for on-going self-selection which allowed participating schools to continue or withdraw after the Information Phase.

During the three-year period, a total of 34 schools participated in the one-year Information Phase. Of the 34 schools, 22 decided by majority vote to engage in succeeding phases of the Program. Table T-2 displays the phases and numbers of schools involved from the spring of Year 2 through the end of PSP Year 5.

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*Recall, however, the Superintendent's statement that the BOC model was influential in designing the structure of the network of Councils, with local citizen groups sending representatives to an area level council.

Figure 12

PHASES OF THE PSP TRANSFERENCE PROCESS AND NUMBERS
OF SCHOOLS INVOLVED THROUGH PSP YEAR 5

| Phase | FY '74 Year 2 | FY '75 Year 3 | FY '76 Year 4 | FY '77 Year 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Selection | Group I (10) | Group II (12) | Group III (12) | -- |
| Information | -- | Group I (10) | Group II (12) | Group III (12) |
| Implementation | -- | -- | Group I (5) | Group II (4) |
| Continuation | -- | -- | -- | Group I (5) |

The ten schools mandated to participate as the first pilot schools included eight elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. At the end of the Information Phase, five elementary schools voted to continue through the next two phases. In Group II, four schools (three elementary and one middle) from a total of twelve chose to continue. The twelve schools in Group III had just arrived at the decision point at the termination of PSP.

A Level II evaluation sub-study, The Process and Effects of Transference (Kaplan, 1978) drew on District documents and field interviews to detail complexities of the process of identifying and selecting pilot schools as well as to probe some of the conditions influencing decisions not to continue. Despite the potential for negative effects from mandating participation for the first pilot group, teachers in 16 schools nominated for Group II voted overwhelmingly after an introductory seminar to take part in the Information Phase and twelve were then designated as pilot schools. The array of factors influencing continuation decisions can be illustrated by situations pertinent to Group I pilot schools. Faculty of one elementary school, for example, wanted to participate, but set some conditions (such as in-school rather than after-school planning time) which could not be met. The transference high school faculty also voted to continue participation, but the school was dropped from formal involvement by a decision of Transference administrators in favor of a more direct and informal relationship with Greer High School focused on the faculty-advisor role.

> *FINDING AND JUDGMENT: Of the 34 schools involved in the Transference Program, 22 could have completed two or three years of the Program by PSP Year 5. Of these, 12 discontinued after the Information Year. Multiple factors influenced the decisions and we judge that no simple conclusions can be drawn from mere enumeration of schools following through the total Transference process.*

Activities and activity participation. Approximately fifty diverse activities, adapted to distinct phases of transference, were designed for pilot school personnel--some appropriate to specific role groups such as principals or Learning Community Coordinators, others open to all school staff.

The year-long Information Phase included exposure to the overall PSP concept and an introduction to the range of associated activities through a variety of experiences:

- orientation workshops
- "Student for a Day" experiences (exposing participants to four learning modes)
- visitations to PSP schools for pilot faculty and students
- meetings with the Board of Cooperatives
- one-to-one interactions with PSP teachers

A "Depth of Understanding" scale provided a pre- and post-activity measure of participants' grasp of the concept and its components.

The second year Continuation Phase offered more focused experiences:

- workshops (designated by PSP) on Learning Community and Coordinator Role; "We Agree" experiences; Instructional Improvement Committee; Home-school Communications; Mainstreaming; and Open Classroom Designs.
- university course on Comprehensive Change

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- in-service program on the teacher-advisor role
- visitations to PSP schools focused on learning communities and planning periods
- on-site consultation at the pilot schools (100 days) by resource coordinators and other personnel.

At the end of the year, pilot school personnel identified their specific in-service needs for the following year.

Activities for the Implementation Phase continued in a similar pattern, but with more emphasis on participant identification of "needs".

- workshops on Team Planning; Multi-age Groups; Community Involvement related to Multi-age Grouping, etc.
- visitations to PSP schools
- on-site consultations at pilot schools

In addition, the PSP Summer Demonstration School (Year 4) offered an opportunity for elementary and middle school personnel to engage in practicum experiences related to PSP.

> *FINDING: The level of participation in transference activities by personnel in pilot schools did not appear to be associated with decisions to continue or not to continue in the Transference Program.*

The Transference sub-study drew on information from two surveys of participants from pilot schools (Years 4 and 5) as well as one-to-one and group interviews. Self-reports by participants indicated that four activities attracted the highest percentage of pilot school participants: PSP visitations, on-site consultations/presentations; orientation sessions; and "Student for a Day" workshops. Furthermore, activities which offered the most direct exposure to PSP operations (visitations to PSP schools and "Student for a Day" workshops) and "We Agree" workshops emphasizing participatory decision-making received strongest ratings as "most worthwhile" (Section IV, pp. 47-79). Analyses comparing schools moving to the Continuation Phase with those withdrawing from the Transference Program, however, found very little difference between the groups of schools in terms of degree of participation in activities (Table 4.3, p. 68)

During the Information Phase activities, the ten concepts or practices of

PSP identified as part of the Transference Program were introduced or demonstrated to pilot school personnel.

> *FINDING: In Year 4, participants reported that seven of the ten concepts/practices were already in use by at least 40% of the staff in the 13 schools which did not elect to continue after their first year in the Transference Program.*

In other words, the "new" concepts or methods were asserted by pilot school staff to already be in place, prior to their involvement in the Transference Program. Votes to continue or withdraw from the program, therefore, seemed to reflect not simply a response to the substance of the PSP innovation, but to the appropriateness of participation in such a program for particular schools.

> *JUDGMENT: Two of the greatest weaknesses of the experiment were (1) the neglect to ascertain which activities and concepts were, in fact, already under way in the proposed transference schools and classrooms prior to their inclusion; and (2) the failure to assess participating school staffs' perceptions of specific needs for PSP and other innovations prior to the PSP, the Transference Program's initiation, or both.*

## Adoption/Adaptation

By the end of PSP Year 5, five schools had completed the Continuation Phase (the full three-year cycle of Transference) and four had completed the Implementation Phase (two of the three years of the Program). In Year 5 these staff and staff in schools that had voted to discontinue were surveyed concerning whether the ten concepts/practices (noted in Figure 10, above) were in use in their schools and, if so, to what extent their use was attributed to the Transference Program. The comparative responses are instructive (expressed as percentages of responding teachers).

Levels of use of half of the practices were high across all groups of schools, with the Discontinuing group having the slightly lower percents in each case:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learning Centers | (94%-99%) | Community Involvement | (83%-89%) |
| Success Orientation | (94%-97%) | Student Involvement | (75%-81%) |
| Learning Modes | (85%-95%) | | |

Levels of use of the remaining five practices were distinctly higher in the groups completing the two- and three-year cycle as compared with those discontinuing after the first year. (Percents of 3-year first, 2-year second, discontinuing third)

| | |
|---|---|
| Learning Cycle | (84%-79%-70%) |
| Facility Redeployment | (88%-89%-61%) |
| IIC | (92%-63%-28%) |
| Team Planning | (79%-82%-37%) |
| Learning Community | (59%-76%-28%) |

To what extent was the Transference Program the impetus for these practices?

*FINDINGS:*

- *By the end of PSP Year 5, there were five practices which a third or more of the staff of Continuation (final) Phase schools said were "in use as a result of" the Transference Program. They were:* (a) Creation of an Instructional Improvement Committee (74% + 16%); (b) Learning Communities (43% + 14%); Facilities Redeployment (32% + 41%); Team Planning (32% + 41%); Learning Modes (32% + 66%).*
- *Staff of schools in the Implementation (second) Phase reported relatively high levels (from 30% to 65%) of each of the ten practices as "already in use but strengthened by Transference".*

The extent of prior use of practices (particularly associated with individualization of instruction), however, confounds efforts to assess the impact of the Transference Program. Year 5 survey data from 229 participants suggest some variations across schools in terms of prior experience:

- Instructional Improvement Committee: 74% of respondents from the five Continuation Phase schools reported that IIC's were in use due to the Transference Program, while 72% of respondents from schools withdrawing from the Transference Program reported IIC's were not in use. (56% of respondents from Group II schools indicated IIC's were already in use.)
- Individualization of Instruction (Learning Cycle, Success Orientation, Learning Centers): An overwhelming majority (from 56% to 95%) of respondents from all schools--both those continuing in the Transference Program and those who withdrew from it--indicated that these practices were already in use prior to transference. Those who stayed in were more likely to say that the practices were "strengthened by transference" than those who discontinued.

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*First % is the % saying "in use as a result of"; second % is the % saying "in use strengthened by" the Transference Program.

- Team Planning, Learning Community, IIC: A majority of respondents from schools continuing in Transference reported these activities in use, while a large majority of participants from schools who withdrew (63% to 72%) reported the activities were not in use.

*JUDGMENT: Personnel in schools which voted to withdraw from the Transference Program were already engaged in practices associated with the individualization of instruction and they apparently found little incentive to take on additional practices related to team planning, learning communities, and instructional improvement committees.**

The importance of attitudes towards participatory decision-making is reinforced by an analysis of Year 4 data on teacher role in decision-making.

*FINDING: Staffs in schools electing to continue in the Transference Program saw teachers as having more influence (and felt they should have more influence) in decision-making than staffs of those schools electing not to continue in the Transference Program. [CCQ, 1976, Table 6.9, Kaplan, p. 102]*

In addition, however, it is clear that the activities for the individualization of instruction in non-PSP schools influenced responses to the Transference Program. Year 4 interview data, for example, indicated that a number of non-PSP personnel viewed PSP ideas and products as merely new variations on an old theme (p. 87).

Surveys and interviews in Years 4 and 5 yielded additional information on a range of factors perceived to influence the adoption of PSP concepts and practices.

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*Note that diagnostic-prescriptive individualization, which District program adoptions reflected, is compatible with traditional self-contained classroom teaching and environments.

*FINDINGS:*

- *The demographic characteristics of the school staff, the school's location in the County, and the size of the pupil enrollment and staff appeared not to influence adoption.*
- *Factors identified by Transference teachers and principals as influencing adoption were:*
  - *perceived appropriateness of training and materials*
  - *expectation of positive consequences for pupils*
  - *teacher commitment*
  - *social climate of the school, including the support of the school principal*
  - *perceived staff role in decison-making*
  - *anticipated support or help that would be available in early stages*

In addition, school staffs noted that shifting school populations (staff and students) inhibited the implementation of PSP concepts--the larger and more frequent the turnover in a school, the more difficult it was to implement the PSP approach to education.

These local site factors, however, were in turn influenced by features of the design and implementation of the Transference Program and conditions in the Greenville County School District.

## PSP and the Design for Transference

Kaplan (1978) points to differences between the approach to innovating used in the development of PSP and the one incorporated in the Transference design.

### Differences in Approach

> "One of the intriguing questions raised by the Transference Program as it was introduced in this experimental program is why it chose to proceed in so different a fashion from the mode established for the basic innovation itself. When the school district planned the PSP in order to submit a proposal to the federal government, it involved a wide number of district and office staff. It engaged the community and school officials in activities related to needs assessments and establishing priorities. It solicited planning funds and time to prepare the project's design and strategies, and developed its own evaluational criteria and methodology (Level I). None of these types of activities

or procedures were followed with the schools participating in the Transference Program. Nor was evidence of the use of an approach of the type followed by The League of Cooperating Schools for the Study of Educational Change and School Improvement (SECSI).* In this approach personnel from cooperating schools were encouraged to interact, socialize and develop mutual support linkages. Although this (I/D/E/A) program was known to the district's PSP planners, the model does not appear to have been considered. Rather than allow participating schools to examine their own particular programs and perceived needs for innovation, or to engage the community on a broad scale, or to establish interchange between the participating schools for purposes of reinforcement and mutual support, the Transference Program was based more on a "smorgasbord" approach; i.e., the potential schools for PSP Transference were, in a sense, systematically paraded past the PSP experiment; if these schools felt they would like to "try" some of the innovations on display then it was appropriate for them to select these accordingly (within specified limits).

"Still other differences were introduced by the Transference Program which distinguished it markedly from the PSP innovation. First, the staffs of schools in the Transference Program were permitted two separate votes on participation. However, PSP faculties had no say over their involvement once the district made the decision to submit its proposal and designated the given cluster of schools as the experimental group (although staff members were allowed to transfer to other schools in the district without loss of pay or status, if they so chose). Second, the Transference schools were provided three years to familiarize and prepare themselves for full entry into the program (the PSP schools had to play "catch up" almost from the start of the project). Third, schools could participate on an individual basis in the Transference Program whereas the PSP schools were conceived of as an integrated K-12, comprehensive program with all schools located in a given locality and having a common community base.

"Thus, there were numerous differences in the manner in which schools, individually and collectively, were treated depending on whether they were PSP or Transference schools." [Kaplan, 1978, pp. 134-135]

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*The Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A); see Mary M. Bentzen, Changing Schools: The Magic Feather Principle (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974).

*FINDING: The variations between PSP and the Transference Program approach to innovation indicate that during the last three years of the Project, PSP was engaged in two conceptually separate and distinct lines of activity: one a developmental effort within eight PSP schools; the other an implementation effort to install selected components of a model program in other district schools, using a systematic staff development strategy.*

The duality in approach was reflected in the dual role assigned to the first Coordinator of Transference. In Year 3, a staff member was transferred from County administrative offices to PSP to (a) coordinate the task of preparing the Continuation Application and (b) to become the first Coordinator of Transference. The design of Transference was heavily influenced by the person who became Year 4 Coordinator of Staff Development, and who in Year 5 took over as Coordinator of Transference. The design had much to commend it as a staff development model, but was conceptually weak in taking into account the additional variables which affect the installation of innovation. The strategy was designed by PSP and, although promoted and endorsed by the District Superintendent (and NIE), it was perceived by many as being PSP's Program rather than the District's Program.

*JUDGMENT: The assignment of responsibility for Transference to PSP (rather than to the Greenville County School District) placed PSP personnel in a problematic situation and weakened the potential impact of the Program on other schools.*

More importantly, the absence of a strong conceptual framework (as contrasted with a good staff development model), resulted in ambiguities in purpose and failure to take into account many potentially negative influences.

Defining "success". PSP staff and the Transference Coordinators were insistent on having "success" of their activities judged primarily on two considerations: (a) Did the "depth of understanding" concerning a given PSP component improve among staff participating in the given Transference activity in which it was being presented? and (b) Was the Transference Program, as proposed in the Continuation Application, adhered to? Others in the District and the Federal agency undoubtedly held different views of "success". NIE was interested not only in congruence of the implemented Program with the activities specified in the Continuation Application (Did they do what they said they would do?) but in effects, including: (a) relative numbers of staff participating in activities, (b) duration of a school's involvement in the Program (since participation was voluntary), and ultimately (c) the degree of adoption/adaptation of PSP concepts/practices in non-PSP schools.

Thus there was a disjunction between what PSP personnel felt they could be accountable for and the expectations of non-PSP parties. PSP, in essence, was prepared to implement a staff development model (see Ch. 4) assuring sound understanding of new practices through presentations and opportunity to explore them; opportunities to observe practices in a real-life setting; opportunities to practice the new behaviors in one's own setting with resource people (PSP) to call upon for assistance and feedback. While all of that is conducive to change in educational practice, it falls in the category of "necessary but not sufficient". The conceptualization fell short of taking other variables into account. Thus Kaplan (p. 134) concluded that none of the above possible definitions could be "treated singly or collectively, as an ultimate determinant of 'success' because there were so many other simultaneous variables operating", there were constraints in data collection, and "throughout, no consensus was arrived at concerning a definition or set of criteria for 'success'" (p. 133).

Negative Influences. The absence of a strong conceptual framework and of District assumption of responsibility for implementation resulted in a program design which failed to take into account many potentially negative influences:

Hostility to PSP: Non-PSP schools tended to resent the high level of funding available to PSP schools and to set unrealistic expectations for changes within PSP schools. The decision to encourage adoption of PSP concepts and practices in other schools without significant funding--and the mandated participation of the first pilot group--further increased the resentment. In making efforts to overcome such hostilities by "soft sell" presentation of PSP as developmental and not a paragon of enlightened practice, the Transference Program was attempting to do two incompatible things: to successfully demonstrate the virtues of the new program and to down-play its achievements (e.g., "We may be doing some things differently but that doesn't mean we have all the answers.")

Donor-recipient relationship: The PSP transference process was developed primarily by the PSP (donor) staff for the Continuation Application to NIE. Transference schools (recipients) were expected to participate in activities as they were designed, scheduled, and conducted by the PSP group and they had little to say about the overall design or specific activities. Although the PSP staff was sympathetic to specific requests for programs or rescheduling, the entire process and the reservoir of activities were donor designed and controlled; the recipients were cast as passive consumers; to be serviced but not consulted.* Not only did this type of relationship place the two groups in a formal and somewhat awkward relationship for positive collaboration and mutually supportive partnership, it also resulted in a sameness throughout, with each of the Transference schools tending to be treated in a like manner despite the PSP espoused philosophy of individualization.

Absence of incentives: A significant change in staff behavior or in school operation requires some persuasive conditions or reasons for their occurrence. (E.g., formal mandate, improvements in pupil performance, salary or promotion.) The Transference design did not appear to provide any noticeable motive for administrations, staff or the PSP transference staff to have schools adopt the innovations. The potential rewards for attempting the changes were scant and the risks of failure or criticism from peers or community were always a heavy factor. PSP Transference staff held the position that they should be judged only on their ability to successfully communicate or convey the new ideas. Thus they completed the activities specified in their proposal/plan with a high degree of efficiency, but with a high degree of "sameness" over the three-year period.

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*Note the disjunction between good intentions and perceived relationships. PSP designers, based upon what they had learned from experience, wanted to assure that "needs" of the comprehensive program were not held hostage to an ill-assorted package of activities derived from what others said they needed. The intent was to provide a solid holistic base of interacting components and then phase in a "tell us what you want" approach--which was done with those who elected to stay in the Program through the Continuation Phase.

Limited involvement of parents and students: Although some parents and pupils had nominal involvement in transference activities, the activities failed to reach significant numbers of these two groups or to involve them in any real sense in final decisions concerning adoption of the PSP innovation. The merely routine fulfillment of participatory processes as written in the plan meant that major influence and support for change appears to have been limited to the customary educational/institutional personnel rather than to have reached to a broader base (as in the original design of PSP).

## Budgets and Credibility

An additional set of factors associated with budgets and credibility affected the climate and conditions for sharing the PSP innovation in the District.

The District (via the Superintendent) experienced some early disillusionment because Federal contracting and budgeting arrangements departed from original expectations. And, within the District, personnel in PSP and other schools experienced disillusionment over prospects for District support of innovation, given changes in the financial situation. Credibility was called into question in both cases.

Interviewed in Year 4, the District Superintendent expressed the view that shifts in Federal contracting and budgeting arrangements inhibited District freedom to "spread the word" in their own style and as quickly as they would have liked. Initially, contractual and budgetary arrangements seemed innovative and flexible, but shifts in the Federal climate tightened them:

> ...All of a sudden they said: You must fit the old system. We might have been further along with transference--had other schools engaged in transference activities; but they had to have

> a written proposal and approval. We would have done much more inservice training of total District staff. The original goal was to have PSP as a pilot project for Greenville County and then for South Carolina and the nation. We needed more freedom to do that, in budgeting and spending. We have had very little effect on the State. And not as much on the District as we could have if I could have organized workshops of teachers and administrators... *[District Superintendent, 12-76]*

NIE, for its part, expected the District to phase in increasing support for continuing and spreading innovation as Federal support was being phased out. District intentions to "pick up some of the tab" (e.g., paraprofessional costs, facilitators, etc.) might have been fulfilled if the financial climate had been as comfortable as expected. But midway during PSP, the District experienced financial difficulties due to defeat of the school budget by the public and subsequent hotly contested or tightly drawn budgets. This turn of events raised questions about the future of PSP after the fifth year when Federal funds would be terminated and the nature of District support at that time. Uncertainty, pessimism, and questions of credibility colored the District context during the last two years of the Project and had direct impact on the Transference Program.

It was felt at Superintendent level that strong pressure could not be exerted to promote the educational improvement program in the absence of some financial support incentives to the schools. Be that as it may, the nature of the commitment to PSP and to Transference at District and area levels appeared to be either weak or vague. Although there was no direct evidence of opposition, there was likewise no direct evidence of supportiveness. Aside from participation in the process of selecting Transference schools, District personnel seemed to have played insignificant roles in most Transference activities. There appeared to be a transition from some assurance at the start of the Project to ambivalence during its middle years, to guarded pessimism at its conclusion. And it was in this climate that the Transference Program was largely implemented.

> *JUDGMENT: Viewed as a staff development model, the Transference Program can be rated more highly than when viewed as a strategy for diffusing innovation. Given the constraints internal to the Transference*

*design and external to it (in the District), it is remarkable that it accomplished what it did!*

## D. CLOSING THE BOOKS

### Intentions

In 1971 when school officials of the School District of Greenville County began planning and negotiating with Federal officials, the intent was to achieve "planned, systematic improvement in the educational system in a comprehensive fashion". The Greer area, designated as the Piedmont Schools Project, was thought of as a pilot area for more widespread change, ultimately touching the 90 or so schools in the large County District. Initial intentions and expectations were that the District would assume more and more responsibility for supporting Project positions so that "at the end of the five years the whole District would be more like PSP". *[Superintendent, Year 4, 6-76]*

The Continuation Application of Year 3 contained a staffing profile charting the intended transition of positions through Years 4, 5, and 6 from the PSP budget to the County budget. Although some Project-specific roles and secretarial/bookkeeping positions were deleted, key staff were to be transferred to District positions and some paraprofessional positions were to be absorbed in the teacher allocation budget.

A plan, then, was in place to ensure a smooth transition from Project status to operation in the mainstream of the Greenville County School District.

### Contextual Supports for Sustaining PSP Concepts

> *FINDING: As PSP moved through its five-year cycle, the Board of Trustees of Greenville County School District took some initiatives to generate changes in District education consonant with PSP commitments to individualization of instruction, community participation, and school improvement.*

As we noted in Chapter One, the District had a history of innovating prior to PSP, but the innovations were piecemeal in nature and did not pervade the system. During PSP, the District moved towards a more comprehensive approach. During PSP Year 2, the Board of Trustees adopted 16 goals to serve as the basis for comprehensive educational improvement in the District. Under this plan, every school was to design and/or implement programs to better meet the needs of individual schools as well as District commitments. The Piedmont Schools Project was to play a vital role in this overall educational renewal. As we noted above, one third of the District's schools were to become directly involved in the formal Transference Program. Other schools were to submit proposals for school improvement and to develop in-service plans for improving staff competencies and instructional outcomes. PSP staff were to be involved in reviewing the proposals, to assure comprehensive rather than piecemeal improvement strategies; and they were to serve as resource consultants in the development of the related in-service plans.

The Board also exerted initiatives which reinforced PSP emphasis on community participation by reorganizing an existing district-level Advisory Committee structure. The new plan (which, according to the Superintendent had been suggested by the PSP cooperatives structure) called for a citizen's cooperative at each school by Fall of Year 5, as the base of a system of advisory councils at school, area, and district levels. These initiatives represented District priorities consonant with the goals and objectives of PSP and they suggested an environment supportive of continuation of PSP concepts and practices after the termination of the Project.

## Contextual Constraints on PSP-style Opeaations

Several developments in Greenville and in the larger society, however, introduced negative influences on the District stance vis-à-vis the Piedmont Schools Project and educational improvement strategies. First, inflationary pressures experienced nationally hit Greenville County particularly hard. Economic pressures precipitated public reaction against increase in the costs of public schools. For a school district without fiscal autonomy, the defeat of a 1975 referendum to increase the millage had serious repercussions for the school budget. During Years 3 and 4 of the PSP, annual cutbacks in the

Greenville County School budget of approximately $2 million dollars each year (in a $50 million dollar County budget) forced elimination of 220 positions in the two-year period. The Superintendent, therefore, was faced with the task of reducing existing operations rather than developing new programs. He spoke thus of the impact on the planned role of PSP in Transference and the withdrawal from early commitments:

> I don't know that we at the District level can hold a gun to them in terms of expectations when we are not able to supply their needs in the classrooms. So I think it is going to be more now a matter of trying to hold on and not expect as much from Transference as once we might have.... There is a great deal of retrenchment now. A backing away from additional positions, etc... I don't think the citizens of this School District realize, and the citizens of Greer, that in a way this is a violation of the trust and arrangement that had been accepted, that now it is time for us to do our part. I think that this was a moral commitment on our part... *[Superintendent, Year 4, 6-76]*

School personnel proposed several interpretations of the negative vote on the bond issue, especially in the Greer area where the referendum had suffered one of its strongest defeats: satisfaction with the schools and the extra Project money in Greer reducing the sense of need for taxes to support the total system; dissatisfaction with the schools; or a simple selfish refusal to raise taxes. Neither the Superintendent nor the local personnel thought that dissatisfaction with the schools was a reason for the Greer vote. One PSP administrator noted:

> I believe it was because we had so much money here that they didn't vote "yes" on the referendum.... It was not a vote against education.... The people I talked with were saying: "We just don't have the money and our schools are doing pretty well.... People are having too many problems with taxes and we're locked into a situation where we have to get their vote. *[PSP administrator, 12-76]*

Interviewed in Spring of Year 4, the Superintendent conveyed his feeling that the monetary constraints would be temporary: "I don't think the money squeeze is going to be here too long.... Maybe even before the Project is over things will be better," and he spoke of cutbacks in administrative structure as "more of an emergency measure." This view turned out to be over-optimistic.

The fiscal pressures were accompanied by political tensions apparent at the beginning of Year 5 when the Board of Trustees shifted from a nine-member to a twelve-member structure. Election of the new Board took place just before PSP Year 5 at a time when District administration felt there was insufficient time for candidates to get out and meet parents and teachers in each area. Coalitions representing the Property Owners' Association and an opposing Citizens for Greenville group assembled slates of candidates. The August 1976 election introduced seven new members to the Board, with the newcomers moving into chairperson and vice-chairperson roles. Leadership positions, therefore, were held by those without previous direct involvement in PSP, and the Board itself freely accepted the label "conservative". (When four school boards from across the country--two "liberal" and two "conservative"--were asked to speak at a National Urban/Suburban Conference in Spring 1977 on the topic "What Shall We Expect From Our Schools?", the Board of Trustees agreed to represent the "conservative" view.)

Finally, during the life of PSP, growing national concern about declining SAT scores and other indicators of poor academic performance of students generated increased attention to "basic skills"--generally interpreted as reading and math competencies measured by norm-referenced testing. In Year 5 interviews, the Superintendent of Schools identified "basic skills" as "the number one agenda today" and the PSP Director noted:

> What happens in the next couple of years will have a lot to do with the leadership provided because we are getting pressure for "back to the basics". The problem will be to share information with the public that lets them understand that basics can be taught effectively in an organizational structure and atmosphere of openness as well as, if not better than, in more traditional settings. *[PSP Director, Year 5, 12-76]*

In line with this, PSP adopted "Reinforcing the Basics Through Comprehensive Change" as the thematic title for its three-day nation-wide educators' conference in Year 5 (April 1977).

> *JUDGMENT: By the end of PSP, a variety of socio-economic and political currents had transformed the educational environment of the Greenville County School District and shaped a context alien, if not hostile, to the instructional priorities of PSP.*

## Continuity of Operation

The plan for re-entry of the eight PSP schools to the mainstream of the school system included both organizational adaptations and staffing changes. Organizationally, the Greer schools were to be incorporated with ten other schools as one of the areas of the District under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent. Because two of the ten schools had participated in the Transference Program and one was a vocational center which young people from High School went to for part of the day, the enlarged 18-school area included only seven schools without previous involvement with PSP. Although initial plans for the assignment of the Year 5 PSP Director to the position of Assistant Superintendent of the enlarged area had to be changed when the Director assumed a position out of State, the intent and expectation was that the new Area Assistant Superintendent would be experienced in and committed to PSP policies and practices.

During the final months of the Project, the PSP Director played an active role in building staff morale and orchestrating the transition to Year 6 so that a PSP-style operation would be in place when the appointment of the new Area Assistant Superintendent was made. Through Federal funding for Special Education, three psychologists, six speech and hearing teachers, would be assigned to the Area Office (as compared with one and two respectively before that), and the Resource Coordinator was given responsibility for building the area as a functioning unit. (Recall that PSP work in mainstreaming and related staff development was considered exemplary.) A teacher resource room was established in the Area office building under the direction of a 5-year PSP veteran. This would make available centrally to larger numbers of people materials, etc. purchased by the Project and previously housed in PSP schools. Special plans were also made for staff development during the summer for the eight former PSP schools, the two transference schools, and the eight non-transference schools that constituted the post-PSP area of the District. The PSP Director, therefore, anticipated a strong nucleus of people well-oriented to PSP and felt that the ground had been laid for PSP-style education to be maintained and melded with the other schools making up the new area. *[Interview with PSP Director, Year 5, 6-77]*

In a Year 4 interview, the District Superintendent of Schools pointed to two additional organizational arrangements at the District level which he judged supportive of continuing and spreading PSP. One was the on-going attention to staff development through the designation of Greenville as a pilot district for the State, whereby teachers could receive in-service training with college and renewal credit. PSP school and area staff were to play an increasing role in District-wide staff development. A second development was the strengthening of evaluation capability at District level. The District invited the original architect and director of the PSP Level I evaluation team to advise the District on how to organize this new venture. "If we had not liked the traits of Level I, we would not have invited him back; so I think the whole philosophy and concept of district evaluation is a consequence of what they have been doing [in PSP]." [Superintendent, Year 4, 6-76].*

An examination of the continuity of personnel experienced in PSP reveals several distinctive patterns. Several specific shifts of staff were arranged for the time of Project termination. For example, the Program Manager of School C who had developed strong skills and reputation in staff development moved to staff development work at District level. The person appointed to School C leadership in his place was a former PSP resource coordinator judged to have the ability to continue the development of PSP-style education in the school. One of the former facilitators of operations (positions which were not maintained after PSP) was assigned as Assistant to the new Area Superintendent. A teacher from School A who had done a lot of staff development and demonstration school work was to become Area Resource Consultant (equivalent to staff development coordinator).

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*The process and effects of internal evaluation in PSP was a focus of study, which is not dealt with substantially in this document. During Project Year 5 the evaluation staff became increasingly involved in District work, while continuing to work with PSP. While the intent was a broad philosophy and approach to evaluation, in fact the evaluation director felt he spent an inordinate amount of time and energy assuring the processing of District test data. Whether some balancing of activity occurred subsequently is not known.

Finally, some positions integral to PSP school operation during the five Project years were deleted: in particular, the budget provision for Year 6 contained no provision for the extra paraprofessionals who had served as instructional aides and as instructors for the elementary Related Arts program. While schools continued to be eligible for aides on other grounds (ESEA-Title I, for example), the process and the substance of the curriculum seemed likely to be affected--because the presence of these paraprofessionals had facilitated multiple small groupings for individualization of instruction, had given teachers released time for team planning, and had provided quality instruction in the elementary Related Arts Program, integrated with the overall school curriculum.

For personnel at school building level, Year 5 was a year of silence from the District about arrangements for continuation. Program managers had hoped, for example, to negotiate an arrangement whereby two Related Arts paraprofessionals could be hired through reallocation of teacher funds. When budgets prepared by District administration and presented to the Board of Trustees in the spring of Year 5 failed to include provision for paraprofessionals, PTAs at individual schools and the PSP Cooperative wrote letters "through channels" supporting school positions--to no avail.

> *JUDGMENT: In the absence of direct participation of the rank and file PSP personnel in District planning for the post-PSP era, the failure to continue the role of paraprofessionals, and to examine the Related Arts Program, etc. were interpreted as a signal of weak commitment to PSP at District level.*

## Continuity of Commitment

Although persons at upper organizational levels could point to a variety of organizational and personnel arrangements designed to sustain PSP, by and large, District decisions about continuation appear to have been made without significant input from or consultation with PSP personnel. Conversely, although a team of PSP program managers and other groups worked on arrangements for continuation, they apparently developed no systematic strategy to influence the decision-making process at District level. The PSP Director, for example, suggested twice to the Superintendent that the seven new members of the Board of Trustees participate in an orientation to PSP through a special "Student for a Day" workshop. When no action was taken on the suggestion, the matter was dropped.

In the period before the 1976 Board elections, the District Superintendent expressed displeasure because "groups of principals and teachers are meeting with individual Board members", a short-circuiting of "proper channels" that "can produce chaos". Rather, he felt, "staff ought to move all their concerns and suggestions through the channels" *[Supt., 6-76]*. PSP personnel felt that they did work through "the proper channels" in Year 5, but there was a pervasive feeling that the District was not responsive. The PSP Year 5 Director made special effort to be open in sharing with staff "whatever I know about what's going on" and he averred:

> I totally feel that they *[program managers, etc.]* got enough opportunities for input. I think they feel they had that opportunity up to my level--positively! They know it was transmitted by me to the District level. I'm not certain they have positive feelings past that. *[PSP Dir., 6-77]*

The feelings expressed by staff were indeed not positive as far as relations with the District were concerned. People did not feel that District personnel had involved them in decisions, that "anybody over there" really cared enough to come look see or to discuss the situation face to face.

The information and communication vacuum created a climate of disappointment and frustration among PSP personnel during the last months of the Project. In Year 5 interviews, several program managers reported their own dismay and that of their staffs. Referring to the issue of Related Arts and interdisciplinary experiences, one program manager observed:

> We were granted a lot of money to do this and we could easily have transferred it. Why didn't somebody from the District come over and say: "Look! Here is a Related Arts program that is good. They have trained these people and they are doing a good job. Test scores *[in these areas]* are higher. Let's try it." They had to hire four professional people, and if we look at four people costing about $48,000, they could have kept the six or nine Related Arts paraprofessionals here. *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*

Speaking more generally, the program manager of another elementary school noted:

> We are viewed as a separate part of the County. I'm resentful of it because when we were getting funded, we had their support, but now I think it is with pleasure that they say: "Now you can live like the rest of us." We can't even keep programs we want that wouldn't cost any money because they just don't want us to have these things any more, period!...
>
> Some *[at District level]* have backgrounds in secondary education, so they don't understand or accept these ideas. They think what we are doing is a three-ring circus. The High School people have some really good things now and they are really frustrated. It breaks my heart to hear them say, "We've been courted and promised everything and now they are just turning us away cold." I think others don't realize how much teacher time and effort went into these five years. Six million dollars is a lot, but it doesn't begin to touch how much this cost in teacher time and effort. *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*

Comments were evenly divided between program-related aspects of PSP and those that could be viewed as "hassle-related". The only program aspect attracting a substantial number of elementary teacher comments was multi-aging; 21% of all elementary teachers (= 38% of those responding at all) commented, most comments coming from teachers in one elementary school where nine teachers (of a faculty of 15) noted that they would like the system eliminated at the level of grades 1 and 2; by inference they would retain it from grade 3 onward. Small percentages of Middle School teachers (less than 5%) identified aspects such as reducing the size of clusters, the need for common textbooks, and open education philosophy. Almost all the "hassle-related" comments pointed to unhappiness with disruptions caused by visitors, paperwork, and evaluation--associated with the Transference Program and the "fishbowl" aspects of working in a major Federal project.

The negative expressions tended to focus on disillusionment because teachers felt that the District had reneged on commitment and not bothered to communicate, while at the same time managers conveyed that they would "make do" and remain committed to PSP-style education.

> You can continue what you want to continue. It might be harder to get substitutes.... We've had five years of practice. There should not be that much difference. This year there are two

> more children per teacher because of a cut-back in the number of professionals we can hire. There's no serious lack of learning going on. *[A Program Manager, 6-77]*

Teacher perspectives on "phasing out" were captured by a set of open-ended questions included in the Year 5 end-of-Project survey. In response to the question: "What aspects, if any, of the PSP do you think you will miss most next year?" the following items were mentioned most often by elementary and Middle School teachers (percentages mentioning the item in parentheses):

| Elementary Teachers | |
|---|---|
| -loss of instructional aides | (73%) |
| -loss of related arts paras | (60%) |
| -loss of planning time | (53%) |
| -loss of Related Arts program | (19%) |
| -reduced individualization | ( 7%) |
| -loss of resource coordinators | ( 6%) |

| Middle School Teachers | |
|---|---|
| -loss of instructional aides/paras | (54%) |
| -loss of staff development (workshops, visits) | (39%) |
| -loss of planning time | (13%) |

A second question asked: "What aspects, if any, of PSP would you be happy to see changed or eliminated next year?" There was only one-sixth the number of comments in response to this question as to the first (30 compared with 180). A third question asked: "Based upon your experience in the PSP, if you had it to do over (that is, implement the various PSP-type innovations in education), what would you recommend be done differently?" About one-third of elementary and of Middle School teachers left the item blank or answered, "Nothing". Comments offered reflected the same concerns as in question two--localized desire to change multi-aging at primary level; and references to wishing to have smaller learning communities and teams at Middle School (20%)

Responses were carefully completed and reflective. In general, they may be interpreted as an indication of high satisfaction or low dissatisfaction on the part of teachers as a group--and a potential base for sustained commitment to PSP approaches.

Interviews with High School personnel, however, revealed a range of perspective and of affect. Desire to keep the components of innovation was strong; but disillusionment with lack of District interest and help was at least as strong during Year 5. One High School learning community coordinator communicated extreme disenchantment:

> We administered surveys to parents, and they said they were happy with things as they are. We gave surveys to the students, and they said they were happy. And we gave them to our teachers, and they said they were happy. We might as well not have done it. Here we are, blissfully planning for transition, and there's not going to be any transition. I feel let down. We submitted recommendations as a result of all these surveys. Do you know not a single person from that office came over here to say, 'Hey, let's put our heads together and see what we can do about this.' No one was sympathetic. No one. And I feel we were completely abandoned by Greenville County [School District].
>
> I've told [the program manager] we're going to have at least twice the dropout rate next year, 'cause we can't offer the same options to students that we have been. He doesn't think so. But he wasn't here before the start of the Project. He doesn't know what this school was like. I do.... And you can't be anything but honest with students. At least I can't operate any other way. But here we are heading right back to semester long courses.... [High School Learning Community Coordinator, Year 5, 5-77]

The Program Manager, however, saw things quite differently: "Most everything here will stay the same. We have been pushing individualization and will still push that..."

Some of the complexities of initiating and sustaining a major innovation are captured in a statement appended by a respondent to the Year 5 Teacher Survey. The teacher had carefully and critically completed assessments and was concerned that the Level II evaluators understand that her critical checkmarks did not mean that she had a negative attitude to PSP. Her statement is reproduced in full below (broken into segments to highlight the points), because it speaks of the hard and dedicated effort, the humanistic approach, and the kinds of understandings and difficulties associated with implementing the new instructional environment. And, typical of many PSP teachers, the writer conveys a balance between commitment to PSP approaches and the frustrations in implementing them.

*I'm critical but not negative*

"This is to convey to the Evaluation Team that in no way should the checks made on this survey reflect a negative attitude...

*I agreed to and accepted PSP philosophy*

"Five years ago, I agreed to and accepted the PSP philosophy (a flexible and individualized program). The program has allowed students to choose their participation according to interest rather than "follow the sheep" routine...

*The staff support has been fantastic*

"... The supportive staff from PSP has been fantastic. Consultants have moved into our classrooms, working with teams and groups of students, helping in areas which seemingly were weak...

*The innovations were complex and demanding*

"... The innovative changes called for a new kind of flexible scheduling which enabled interdepartmental planning, long periods, short periods, research time, new courses and mini-courses--resulting in diagnostic teaming, coordination of teaching ideas which eliminated duplication and permitted us to take the children from where they were. Efforts are being made desperately, by me personally, to make learning meaningful and humanistic...

*I will strive hard to continue the creative, humanistic approach*

"... It is my desire, in the future (after project) to strive hard to create a psychological climate, as in the past five years, so the children can be free to make mistakes, free to be curious, feel free to learn from their environment, from students, from experience, and from me...

*There were problems of staff turnover, assignment, and training that made life hard*

"Unfortunately, this community and L.C.C. have experienced many difficulties. For the past three years, six teachers have been assigned with little or no training prior from PSP staff development. Workshops have helped, while here, but I have endured a tolerance test while teachers learned with the children.

"I have never been asked to choose a teacher with whom I've worked. Many were assigned for semesters only--moving to other positions, out into County and to other states.

"Problems as above (simple in nature) have left much to be desired. Therefore, consideration should be given to survey form checks...

*But I'd never go back to a totally traditional classroom*

"I would make some changes as indicated in questionnaire responses, but basically I'd like the same program. Never back to a total traditional classroom!"

*JUDGMENT: Within the constraints of budget, personnel, and educational climate by the end of the Project, some organizational arrangements were set in place at District level to ensure continuity. In addition, there was in the District a base of teachers experienced in dealing with the frustrations and in meeting the demands of implementing a new instructional delivery system and environment. Given the absence of clearcut channels for quality communication and interaction between District decision-making and local delivery levels, the future of a PSP-style education will be strongly determined by administrative efforts to articulate a commitment and to provide tangible support and recognition of PSP policies and practices.*

8

# PART III

# LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### A. INTRODUCTION: THE VALUE OF PRAXIS

- "I met Friday all day with NIE officials. I sat listening to OE people. I don't know whether they have really changed *[= begun to listen to practitioners]*. I don't think they have. I sat there listening to accounts of things going on--projects and so on.... We asked: 'Where are you getting your inputs?' --'Through grants to a university, involvement of teacher labor groups.'..." Clearly, Dr. X found these an inadequate source of input for decisions about action to improve educational practice... *[From notes on interview with Supt., 12-76]*

- "These people who came and looked *[= external observers]*--they didn't always understand what we were doing.... They didn't dig below the appearance.... If they had asked us..."
  *[PM, High School, 12-76]*

- "Sure, I could have told them. But they didn't ask about that. They didn't ask the right questions..."
  *[Teacher, Middle School, 2-79]*

These excerpts from field notes suggest some of the frustration of practitioners (from superintendent, to building principal, to teacher) with the ways in which Federal agencies and the evaluators they support go about the business of seeking "to improve educational practice", while listening with only half an ear (or no ear) to practitioners. Towards the end of the Project, we made a strong effort to glean from PSP staff their perspectives on the experience, the practical wisdom they thought should be shared about the process of implementing systemic change in schools.

PSP experience was incredibly rich, and many staff members were not only heavily involved in action but also capable of reflecting about action--able to express what was learned by experience. That learning covered all phases of the Project and all components of the innovation. Some of it is apparent in prior chapters of this report, some of it is documented in PSP's Final Report and Continuation Application. But THE innovation (as contrasted with its constituent parts) was putting it all together--seeking to create a "Better Way in Education" by implementing comprehensive or systemic change--and this is the emphasis in the present discussion of learning from experience.

If you had it to do over, what would you do differently? If you were to set up a project like PSP in another school or district, how would you go about it? What advice would you give if you were consulting for a group that wanted to implement comprehensive change?... This line of questioning was probed in formal extended interviews in Year 5 with all those holding major leadership positions: the district superintendent, area/project level staff, and the program managers of each school. The advice proffered may be synopsized thus:

1. Commit yourself to the total systemic change but phase in the change gradually.
2. Emphasize people before programs. In particular, select staff carefully when you can; build awareness and trust and commitment; cultivate open communication within the schools and the school system, and with the community.
3. Implement staff development and shared decision-making processes first and use these processes in planning further implementation.
4. Phase in other changes in organization and program gradually, within the overall commitment to comprehensive change.

This segment of the report elaborates on these phasing-in change topics and adds some reflections from an external perspective. The intent is to bring to the fore insights from practitioner experience and perspectives for the benefit of those committed to systemic approaches to improving educational practice, whether in schools, districts, States or Federal agencies.

The discussion is divided into three main parts. First, we focus upon innovating--the process of introducing a complex set of changes to transform traditional practice. Second, we discuss some key elements in what has been learned about innovators--particularly those assigned leadership positions at area and building levels. Third, we consider what praxis contributes to understanding the innovation. The theme is developed that systemic change requires two types of integration. With the focus on innovation, integration is understood as the melding of component pieces of "comprehensive change". With the focus on innovators, integration has the social meaning of building community--seeking to increase the mutual understanding, compatibility and supportiveness of people involved in the change process as they live and learn together.

## B. INNOVATING: BRINGING COMPONENTS OF CHANGE TOGETHER

### "Do it all, but not all at once!"

> *ADVICE: Do it all, but not all at once! Sustain strong commitment to systemic change, but phase components in gradually. Pace yourself to stay the distance.*

As this segment was being drafted, the Boston Marathon was in progress. Introducing systemic change in schools has some of the characteristics of a marathon. Distance runners have to find ways to train and to build up skills, energy and morale for the long haul, pacing themselves in order to achieve their goals. If they overtrain, start out too fast, or try to run too many races in a short time period, their overall achievements are likely to be reduced, even seriously prejudiced.

PSP staff in the start-up period of the Project may be seen as risking all of these things: training too hard, starting too fast, doing too much at once. It is a tribute to their commitment and endurance that most of them stayed the distance, that they "hung in there" in the stressful early period and progressed to achieve so much towards "A Better Way in Education".

From district superintendent, to project administrators, to program managers and teachers, the strongest advice from practitioners to those implementing large-scale change is" "Go more slowly than we did. Don't try to do everything at once." The companion advice, paraphrased, is: "Don't settle for less than commitment to comprehensive change." Typically, the advice was expressed thus: "You have to be willing to do everything but have sense enough to do it on a gradual basis. You need to set a priority list and then proceed cautiously into the new areas." [Program Manager, 6-77]

The injunction to "Do it all, but not all at once" was translated into specific advice on how the phasing in of change might best be managed. Asked for his judgment on "doing it over" in Greenville County or elsewhere, the District Superintendent responded: "I'd stage it by school level and not take K-12 all at once. I'd take seven or eight years to do it, starting lower down and working through the system." [Supt., 12-76]. He attributed problems at Middle School in part to the fact that it inherited students whose prior schooling experience had been in highly structured elementary schools (i.e., physically, socially, and instructionally traditional). None of the PSP area or school leaders suggested phasing in by school level. However, operating from the premise that K-12 schools would seek together to implement systemic change, they counseled very careful attention to the beginning stages of the process. Said the Year 5 Director:

> I would rather move slowly and have people functioning and involved than to say I have done it all at one time and play catch up all the way through." [PSP Dir., Year 5, 6-77]

He was adamant about the need for lead time to work with area people before instituting major programmatic changes. Such time was seen as absolutely essential for building up information and trust, and for planning. Either there should be a six-month lead time before starting the project (i.e., before the major infusion of external funds and major changes in the schools), or else much of the first year of the project should be devoted to laying this foundation:

> If I were to set up such a project again I would want the opportunity to put together my administrative staff and make sure that I had time to build with them a clear understanding of goals and objectives, and work with them to determine the best way to accomplish goals and objectives. There has to be unity from central staff before they can transmit to others that they know what they are doing and where they are going. [PDP Director, Year 5, 6-77]

At no time was it suggested that there be less than total commitment to implementing systemic change. Indeed, given some lead time to establish the understanding noted above, two people advocated tackling all the major processes together at some crude level, and then building in sophistication as you go along. The Program Manager who advanced this view warned against the dangers of incrementalism thus:

> I think you should go all the way with the fullest implementation that your building or budget will allow the first year. Because in the 25 years I have been teaching I have seen too much of "Let's do this this year" and because some people are not pleased with it, it never did go any further. I just feel if I were going to make a comprehensive change I would make it all, even though this is more difficult for the teachers than for anybody else. *[Program Manager, School D, 6-77]*

The Manager of School Programs echoed the same advice:

> My argument about the comprehensive approach is that if you plan it any other way it has to be such a longitudinal effort that it would be difficult to get a comprehensive program. I think with the initial shock of getting in and getting teachers acclimatized to the temperature of the water, then you can move.... It won't take place unless you plan it to take place and have it and can demonstrate to teachers that it is there.... *[Manager of School Programs, 6-77]*

We do have to get completely into the water if we want to learn to swim, but we shouldn't try to learn all the strokes at the same time! When pressed to elaborate, it was clear that the two people who advanced the "do it all crudely and build in sophistication later" view did not in fact advise that all components be introduced at once. Rather, they were conveying that there must be commitment to the total change, with specific planned steps to introduce each phase.

> You must work your way into comprehensive change. You must have a master plan and move with the schedule for the implementation. If you try to do everything at one time, you will produce chaos that you may never be able to rectify. *[Manager of School Programs, 6-77]*

## Understand the History and Ecology of the Schools

Innovation does not take place in a vacuum. By its nature it is an intervention in history with intent to change the course of that history. Some examples from within the PSP area illustrate the inportance of phasing in change carefully and taking into account the varying histories of the schools.

*What not to do: Unplanned change at School G*. Middle School (G) is the prime example, within the PSP area, of what not to do: of the chaos resulting from inadequate planning and phasing in of innovation. Middle School was built and in operation the year before the PSP began. It might be thought that the presence of a new middle school built on the open space plan with the intent to facilitate open education for young adolescents, would represent a head start for a project such as PSP. In fact, the initial experience at Greer Middle was so negative that the "head start" turned out to be a major impediment to the process of implementing the new instructional environment in PSP secondary level schools.

The school was designed with vast open space areas, each capable of housing over 200 students and about ten teachers. It was overcrowded almost from the start. The students came from traditional, highly structured elementary schools. The staff, from traditional school backgrounds, moved into the building while the workmen were still on site and the furniture was being delivered. They did so without benefit of the special staff development which had been intended ("Because of the financial situation, the comprehensive inservice program was never implemented"), and with leadership inadequate to the exceptionally demanding situation. All this occurred at the height of desegregation shifts in school populations. The result was chaotic. Not surprisingly, there was considerable and vocal dissatisfaction with the school on the part of the local community, the teachers, and the students. In the first three years of the school's existence, there was substantial turnover of teaching staff and three different administrator teams.

> When we went into the Middle School (prior to PSP) we had a group of people who didn't know what individualized instruction was from a hole in the wall. Had no training in it at all....

> A lot of people were like that.... We received no training.... We walked into that building while they were finishing building it. Furniture was not there and no materials. I taught with four brand new people and I was the unit leader. Two days later 150 children came to live in that space. We had a lot of purchased programs.... The problem was lack of staff development. We were all aware how bad it was, but we were never able to pull this together. There was a big turnover. There was cynicism and negativism and people were failing. At the same time they were encouraged to go into a new system of open participative management.... And instead of it turning into a positive thing it turned into a bitching session.... *[PSP staff member, 12-76]*

By Year 5/PSP the school had painfully begun to recover from the stigma of its early history as a "zoo". Teachers who had "been there" at the start still talked of the experience much as battle-scarred veterans might share painful memories of being on the front line of fire (but alas, without experiencing at the time the supportive camaraderie of the platoon). Asked what you do first in the comprehensive change strategy, the Program Manager (Year 5) said, only half-facetiously: "The first thing you do is cancel the order for having the walls torn down! It's like ridding yourself of the textbook. It takes away that security you have had for all these years and you are pretty much left on your own and you are not ready for that yet." PSP Middle School experience suggests that the more traumatic the early baptism by fire, the longer it takes to heal the wounds, and the more difficult it is to achieve systemic change. 'Once burned, twice shy' seemed to apply to many of the people involved--staff and community alike.

> *ADVICE: Don't get into systemic change unless you are prepared to plan adequately and invest as much care in the design for staff development and for phasing in change as you do in the design for a new building. Change without adequate support systems is likely to harm the people it is supposed to help--notably the children and the staff.*

Slowing the pace of change at School H. The High School (H) which was also adjusting to shifts in school population, but in a traditional setting, became a PSP school in a climate dominated by the stormy beginnings of Middle School the year before the Project. There was strong community resistance to seeing "their" high school take on any characteristics of Middle School--particularly open space; and the school never did implement open and flexible space utilization in significant degree. By PSP Year 2 this school had its fourth program manager in as many years, prior incumbents apparently having been unable to deal with the major changes accompanying desegregation, on top of which PSP Year 1 brought pressure for systemic change. Although the physical setting was familiar, everything else seemed to be a target for change in Year 1.

> Greer High was basically a traditional school. Black students coming in changed the picture. Then PSP, in my opinion, was more change than they should have taken on in one year. They tried to change everything--the whole short course system, individualization, coming up with an advisee system, learning communities. Everything at one time! And the school was not in a stable situation... [Program Manager, High School/ Years 2-5, 6-77]

What do you do when you are committed to systemic change but confronted with with chaos? The program manager who stepped into this situation at High School deliberately slowed the pace of change--pressures from project management and others notwithstanding.

> When I got here I found students used to getting away with murder. I set out to be firm in discipline and then implement the things we had to do. That's what I did the first year or two.... I got a lot of people coming out to my house, tearing down mailboxes, throwing paint and so on... But it has not happened in the last two years... [Program Manager, High School, 2-77]
>
> My strategy was to preach discipline and implement the new curriculum in a quiet manner... I slowed the pace down and did not push as far as some people wanted... Consultants wanted us to move fast and there was a lot of pressure to move and get everything done right then. They were just anxious to do their job. I was trying to balance off what teachers could take and what we could handle here at the school. And eventually we have done just about everything we said we would do. [Program Manager, High School, 6-77]

High School thus offers an example of deliberate rein on the pace of innovating based upon a judgment about what the school could bear without reaching the point of dysfunctional stress on the organization and its people. The school maintained its egg-crate structure and appearance of conventionality throughout the Project years while introducing significant change in personalizing and individualizing instruction through multi-grade groupings, the advisory system, and the short-course system. Surveys of parents, teachers and students in Year 5 attested high levels of satisfaction with the school generally and with these components of innovation.

> *ADVICE: The situational context for innovation is likely to differ from school to school. Assess the situation and adjust the pace of change accordingly, much as one does with individually paced instruction, while remaining committed to the overall goals for change.*

Steady, phased-in change at School A. The school which showed least strain in implementing comprehensive change was the one which phased it in over the longest period with a carefully planned sequence of steps. Preparation for change began two years before PSP when the parents and staff of a small mill school planned together to move the school into a new building. At the time of integration, therefore, they were able to spend time constructively planning the move from the old school while School A was being built--with movable partition walls between pairs of traditional-sized classrooms. The year before PSP, School A opened in its new building, with six open spaces and double classes, one of them multi-aged across three ages and with a hand-picked, consenting teacher team. During the five years of PSP, the change process was steady, with innovation firmly institutionalized by Year 5. There was one program manager throughout the whole process. Her strongest advice to those undertaking systemic change?--

> Go slowly. Identify one or two areas and work into them.... We had a year ahead of the other schools in the Project, putting us in the limelight. Sometimes we got more favorable comments on our work than the other schools. We didn't have the chaos of some schools because we went into it very slowly.... I kept warning them: You're trying to go too fast, doing it all at one time. Take things by steps. I think people interpreted it that I did not want them to be at the same level I was. But that's where you had many frustrated teachers, parents, etc. Everybody tried to plunge in and do everything at once. *[Program Manager, School A, 6-77]*

PSP experience suggests that conditions for innovating are rarely ideal and that the contexts for innovation vary across schools. But the advice is clear, even from the most apparently ideally situated school: "Go slowly.

Take things by steps." The penalties of moving too fast or without sufficient preparation are severe: they may cost you the innovation. They will "cost" the innovation largely through their negative impact upon staff--the amount of stress placed upon people, and through them on the organization, will be dysfunctional to implementing systemic change. Conversely, moving with careful attention to assuring staff development and support in a sequenced introduction of new processes and programs will provide the necessary (if not sufficient) basis for the desired comprehensive change.*

## First Build the Team and Begin the People-to-People Processes

Building esprit de corps, staff involvement and confidence were repeatedly emphasized as the prime tasks for the first phase in the innovation process, with staff development geared accordingly.

> The first year we would not do anything except prepare people--information orientation plus particular required segments. We'd build esprit de corps, work with the group to show them how it can be done. Get involvement generated and help them understand the decision-making process and their role. In the last part of the first year we would help build a design for changing the school, with a statement that these are the things that must be included and beyond these basics you have latitude. I would phase in more gradually. [PSP Year 5 Director, 12-76]

Program Managers proffered the same kind of advice. Responses to the question, "If you had it to do over, what would you do differently" invariably began with references to going more slowly and to building relationships among staff. People relating well to people was a large part of what PSP was about --administrators, staff, students were to learn how to create a more human, a more personalized environment in which to live and learn together.*

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*A small illustration of comparative phasing in of innovation is offered in Appendix 4. The table contrasts the implementation of multi-aged learning communities in two PSP elementary schools.

> Participatory decision-making would be one of the first things I would do: all the aspects involved; people relating to people. Those are the things that must come in the first component. After that I'd take one curricular area or one impact in organizational structure or both at the same time. The group would decide. *[PSP, Year 5, Dir., 6-77]*

Process before programs was a recurring theme in staff comments: developing new processes for decision-making, for instruction, for staff relating to each other and to children. Processes such as teaming, shared decision-making and individualizing instruction were to be integrated in mutually supporting ways in the new instructional environment.

> ...If you want a comprehensive change program, the key element is the process. Once you have taught the teacher the process of individualizing in one area it can be done in many areas. Don't rush in and buy a lot of materials and equipment. Spend six months working with staff on total process. Talk about teaming--how you work as a team. With that, certainly, will go shared decision-making...
>
> First start teaming. Put teachers on teams and have them continue doing their own thing for a month, beginning to have planning time to work on what to do together. Then hit the grouping and sharing of groups of students. Teachers are frightened by the concept of teaming, so you should start with the shared planning time, then move to sharing of students, then more sharing of students and materials--moving into teaming that way. As you move into grouping and sharing groups, you are certainly getting into individualized instruction... *[Year 5 SD Coord., 6-77; former Middle School teacher]*

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*Once, expecting to hear pronouncements about curriculum, I was surprised to be told: "If I had it to do over?... *[long reflective pause]*...One of my biggest mistakes might have been that I never fired a secretary who is unfriendly to everyone. Been here for years. Does a good job at.... But I have gotten many complaints that she is not friendly." Not being friendly was viewed seriously in a project committed to building good human relationships--a negative example for students, colleagues and community.

PSP elementary schools made varying choices as to which subject area to individualize first. Relative ease or difficulty with particular areas seemed to be more associated with the availability of adequate support services (notably resource coordinators) than with the subject areas themselves. Several people emphasized that there should be no precipitate purchasing of new programs--a bone of contention among managers and resource coordinators in the early period of PSP. Pressure to introduce programs quickly may be influenced both by the eagerness of specialist consultants to promote development of "their" subject areas and by the push to spend program monies because contractual conditions may preclude holding them over from one fiscal period to another. The tenor of PSP advice, however, is that buying programs is not a first phase activity, and that staff should have time and a process for examining and choosing among alternatives before purchase orders are signed.

PSP staff by Year 5 were ready to proffer judgments on the ease or difficulty of implementing particular components based upon experience that varied among schools. Thus, elementary schools, comparable in the environments they sought to create, differed somewhat in the sequence, the pace, and the difficulty with which they incorporated various components. Each PSP school could suggest a preferred sequence, but all would emphasize process and people first. Thus High School, for example:

> [Question: If I were a principal contemplating introducing into my high school PSP kinds of innovation, what advice would you give me on how to proceed?] Personally, I would not attack it all at one time. In the *first year* I would move (1) to organize the PIC and get that started. Then (2) if I were going to have administrative change to a program manager/facilitator team, I would get that started. Then (3) I would organize learning communities by teachers and get that started. With a purpose--saying what they were going to accomplish. This is what you're all going to be doing. Same thing with the PIC, I'd say this is what we're going to be doing. I'd explain the function of the administrative team. Then (4) I believe I would go ahead with the implementation of the advisee period.... You could do all of those things in one year.
>
> Then in the *second year* you could come back and if you wanted to go to the short course system, implement that.

> In the *third year* you could start pushing individualization. By going to the short course system you have individualized to a certain degree. Then the next year, the third year, you could individualize within the classroom. *[Program Manager, High School, 2-77]*

Whatever the judgments based upon particular experience in individual schools however, there was strong consensus across all the schools about where emphasis should be placed in the critical first phase of innovating.

> *ADVICE: In the first phase of the systemic change process, concentrate on building staff confidence and esprit de corps, and developing a participatory planning and decision-making process. Begin the people-to-people processes first and use these to move into the next phase where the group begins to implement change in one curricular area and/or another impact in organizational structure based on group decisions.*

## C. INNOVATORS--THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERS

### "People are the Program"
### Focus on Leadership

> I would go slower. Get the team together. Then go. In years one and two I'd go slow--staff training, building, growing. Second year the same thing goes. Third year it's a wide open field--Run!... We could do as much with half the money. We would go very slowly the first two years and hire the right types of people. People are the program. *[Program Manager, School C, 12-76]*

"Hire the right types of people." "People are the program." But what are the "right" types of people? What are the practical constraints on hiring and utilizing staff? PSP experience suggests the kinds of accommodations that are made between ideal and reality--some accommodations that may be expected, and some that should be avoided.

PSP's 1972 proposal/plan contained an outline of the attributes desired in project teachers (see Chapter 4, pp. 82-83). Leadership positions at area and building level were discussed in terms of roles and functions rather than in terms of the qualities needed to perform them. Given the pivotal importance of these positions in the change process, we sought end-of-project reflections from PSP personnel about the qualities needed for leadership in such a project. Program managers tended to respond in terms of the qualities they thought area level personnel should have, and area personnel in terms of the capabilities needed in program managers! But there is a strong set of common leadership attributes illustrated in quotes from both groups.

> For heading the project we need a mesh of *strong leadership, intelligence* and *experience, a persuader-philosophy type* who could come in and talk, who is not autocratic but *uses shared decision-making and project process.* Now, I liked X as a person--a man of scruples, a person of principles, but he hadn't read anything except Dewey as an undergraduate. His experience and understanding and background did not permit him philosophically to use his world view as a launching pad. His management style was--he didn't like to delegate authority. He was more like a governor--always trying to control everything, bring everything into line--which is what a good textbook administrator does. But it was not what was needed. To use a football analogy, you need a good place kicker on your team and you send in a left tackle.... In spite of that we still pulled off a good show. If I were to rate the whole thing like a ball team, I would rate it as a 500 season. *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*

The team analogy is appropriate. We always want the ideal type; we rarely can find it; and when we do we usually cannot afford it! Given the rarity of persons with ability to both understand the mainstream District and the innovation, with the perfect blend of knowledge and experience in administration, program development, and people leadership--given that, it becomes particularly important to assure that the management structure blends these qualities in a team of people who understand project goals, philosophy and process and appreciate each other's strengths. As to area staff generally, including Manager of School Programs and resource coordinators:

> These positions need to be filled by *persons who can communicate goals and what it takes to achieve the goals,* to other people. They must be *super managers of their own time* and be *evaluation-conscious* at all times. They must be the kind who will *get out into the schools* rather than hang around their offices. People who will see what is done and *establish real rapport with building program leaders.* They should be the bridge between the director and program leaders and should be completely service oriented rather than on an ego trip. *[A PSP Prog. Mgr., 6-77]*

Clearly, the attributes highlighted are important in leadership throughout the project, whether at area level or within schools. The same is true of the characteristics identified for "the right kind" of program managers.

> The most important thing is the ability to work with people--to be a person who will listen and get in and have empathy with other people. *A people-person* -- this is the first criterion. A *high energy level* person *committed to changing schools--humanistic,* making schools a better place for people. A *rich educational background.* Somebody who has *done as much as possible in the classroom.* And I'd like the same qualities for teachers in the innovating schools. *[*Coord. Staff Devt., Year 5, 6-77*]*

> If a person is going to be a program manager, I want someone *knowledgeable about curriculum development*--and I don't mean superficially, but how to develop curriculum and the components of high importance--no skipping steps. Someone really *able to sit down and discuss with classroom teachers and help them do curriculum development*--where we are, where we ought to go, what program needs are, how to restructure what is happening. And *someone who can base that on scientific investigation.* We didn't have that! *[*PSP Dir., Year 5, 12-76*]*

"We didn't have that." Why not? The answer to the "Why not?" question alerts us to a constraint that operates in most situations where we want to change organizations. The organizations (schools in this case) already exist and are staffed up. The schools had principals and teachers before PSP was created. As we noted in Chapter 4, staff already in the schools were told that the change program would be challenging and demand heavy commitments of time and energy. They were given the option to transfer, without loss of status, to other positions in the District. Few chose to do so. Those who remained included some whose stay-put decisions were less a signal of commitment to PSP than the result of other considerations which affect personal decisions (e.g., distance of their home from the school; little time till retirement; familiarity with the school; change won't be that hard; let's wait and see). Reflecting on staffing, the Year 5 Director said:

> In any operation that is new you have to start out as with budget at zero. You have to employ a person in a particular job who has the expertise or strength in a particular area as opposed to trying to keep a person to fill a slot. All the principals who were in the Greer schools stayed the first year. I had worked in the system long enough to know several

> were not the ones to do the particular job. Trouble spots developed personally... [PSP Dir., Year 5, 12-76]

Clearly the only place where the PSP could be said to start out with staff "budget at zero" and employ people to fit the demands of the job, was at project/area level. To this we return in a moment. For the present, we note that the schools began innovating with largely the same leaders and teachers they had before the Project started.

> *ADVICE: When a major change effort is envisaged for schools, there should be strong effort, as in PSP to make current staff aware of the planning. Incumbents should be given the option to transfer out. Expect, however, to deal largely with the same staff as before and emphasize (a) personal expression of commitment to the project and (b) strong staff development to motivate and support staff growth.**

## Continuity and Change in Personnel

There is a built-in constraint in most situations preventing the selection of new actors to play in the drama of change. Still, producing the drama with known players does have some advantages. Some balance has to be sought between assuring the disposition and capability for change, on the one hand, and maintaining continuity on the other.

At the end of Project Year 1, there was significant turnover of personnel at project level and in some schools. In particular, some key management people moved: the Manager of School Programs, the Manager of Staff Support Services, the Furman University Liaison, and three of the eight program managers.** This apparently offered an opportunity to hire "the right people" to lead the change process. Yet, by Year 2 not just the schools but also the Project had a history which had to be taken into account. The shifts in management personnel at that time illustrate the interplay of three variables affecting innovation through hiring practices:

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*Some people interviewed conveyed that "Washington" should be more concerned about staffing key positions and monitoring. The advice, which was not pervasive, was most strongly expressed thus: "I would get a commitment from the superintendent. If you're going to spend six million dollars of Federal monies, I want a personal commitment from you to see that the project is staffed with the people who will make it a success .... The project director should be entrusted with recruitment if not satisfied that a school or a manager is working out to potential. And Washington should tell the superintendent they are concerned that X school is not working out..."

**A fourth was moved from one school to another, so that 50% of the schools experienced a change in leadership at the beginning of Year 2.

1. It is easier to engage in change if you have on board or can hire "the right people" at the outset--start with a clean slate, so to speak;
2. However, the process of implementing change is likely to be smoother if there is continuity of leadership; and
3. Factors other than the change program itself are likely to influence hiring patterns once implementation is under way.

PSP experience both illustrates the validity of these statements and the fact that once any initial possible hiring has taken place (e.g., at project level) there is never again a "clean slate". Rehiring will be complicated by the nature of the shifting circumstances which occasioned it.

Consider first what can be learned from experience with changes in leadership in individual schools.

*Examples: Middle and High schools*. The opportunity arose at the end of Year One/PSP to recruit people who would have the characteristics thought requisite for leadership in the change program in these two large schools. However, the schools had a history and the fact that they were now engaged in systemic innovation was only one element in a complex situation affecting the kind of leadership sought. As sketched above, the pre-project history was stormy. There was perceived "chaos", "lack of discipline", "problems"--associated in part with desegregation shifts in student populations and, in the case of Middle School, with the radically non-traditional building design and inadequate staff development. These were features inherited by PSP which, under PSP/Year 1 leadership seemed to have exacerbated in each school or, at best, had not improved sufficiently to placate the community or reduce teacher and student stress.

The push to "get order in the schools" was at least as important an agenda in hiring new program managers as the commitment to implement the systemic change process. Indeed, "getting discipline" in both schools was viewed as a necessary condition for implementing innovation. The incoming Year 2 program manager at Middle School was the third and at High the fourth in as many years. Moreover, each had to deal with community perceptions that the PSP innovation "caused" the problems.

As we saw above, the High School program manager adopted a strategy of bringing order, deliberately slowing the pace of change, and "moving quietly" to implement shifts in program. Middle School had a stormier climate in which to work: "moving quietly" with change was scarcely possible when the vast open spaces "shouted" radical innovation and were associated in the public mind (and by many staff members) with discipline problems. Administrator hiring and re-hiring in the early years of the school's life brought disturbing swings in the nature of leadership.

> The first year of Middle School *[pre-PSP]* if we could just have had two administrators--one really gung-ho and sold on individualizing and shared decision making and the whole process, and the other a real strong disciplinarian.... But we had two extremes. In the first year of the project *[second year of the school]*, we had people totally committed to individualizing, sharing decision-making, etc. They moved too fast! Wonderful, good-hearted, loving people, with great ideas. But who lost most of the people because they wanted to go too fast. They did not win the support of the teachers and the community. They were labeled outsiders and free thinkers. As a result it was decided everything should change! Do everything differently next year. So we had a change in administration and two people almost at the other extreme came. I question whether they have the philosophy of shared decision-making. The IIC has no decision-making power... *[PSP staff member, Year 5, former Middle School teacher, 6-77]*

These examples illustrate the importance of appraising not just the leadership qualities (knowledges, skills, motivations) associated with the innovation itself, but those demanded by the situation in a particular school at a particular moment in its history. The demands of the innovation and the demands of the situation may be so awesome and complex in some cases that no single person can meet them. There is then a premium on building a leadership team whose members share commitment to the innovation goals, who are compatible personally, and who together have the abilities to create the climate in which innovation can be implemented. One basic element in that climate is trust: particularly trust between teachers and managers. And building trust takes time as well as commitment and skill.

Examples: Elementary schools. The opportunity to hire new leaders for a school or a project during implementation of the change process does offer a chance to "do it over" to some extent, to learn from experience, to "hire the right people". But there is no clean slate on which to write. The change program is under way, the organization exists, and the infusion of new leadership--no matter how capable--is another change which the social system must absorb. No matter what the circumstances leading to the shift in leaders, that shift in and of itself will tend, for a time, to slow the process of implementing planned innovation.

Records show that PSP schools either kept the same program manager through the years of the Project or had only one change in leadership. But this masks some real traumas, particularly in the early period--changes in leaders which constrained the pace and sometimes the quality of innovation. Consider the elementary schools, for example. Only two schools (A and D) went through the five project years with the same program manager, and in both cases the program manager had been with the school group for years before PSP began. The case of School C illustrates the divisiveness that may be associated with shift in leadership.

> The administrator in School C the first two years was extremely popular with one group of teachers and unpopular with another. The person was dismissed and four teachers transferred, stating that as their reason. *[Mgr. of School Programs, 6-77]*

The new program manager was a trained therapist and set about building a school team that could promote the change process by spending considerable time developing self-concept and relationships among staff.*

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*He is the one who said: "In years one and two I'd go slow--staff training, building, growing. Third year it's a wide open field--run!"

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School F changed program managers at the beginning of PSP/Year 2. One change may seem little over five years; but, like High School, School F was experiencing its fourth administrator in four years. Program Manager #4 conveyed some of the trauma involved in such changes--for the community, the staff, the incoming manager (and through them, for the children).

> For eleven years they had a principal at this school who was beloved by all. He was the leader in the community. They adored him. He left in 1971.... There are teachers still here who talk with great pride of the school then and who were very fond of that principal. Things were going well.... In 1972 when the Project began they had X come in; he was moved from another school. He stayed a year...a first year principal...it was a tough school. He could handle it but I think it was hard.... Both were black principals, good principals.... The first one did not choose to leave. The second one chose to leave...got a fellowship at a university.... At the eleventh hour it came about and that is why they were so late in moving me from *[PSP]* School B.... This school was just about torn apart by having had so many principals. It really made a bad situation.... Four different principals! *[Program Manager, School F, 2-77]*

Asked how she handled this situation, the program manager continued:

> I was asked to come here to build *[the school staff into]* a team because I had been doing it at School B.... The timing was so bad. I was asked to do this two days before school began!... I was not received too warmly. And at School B we had had such plans, everyone was crying when I left. It was hard for the new person going in. You know, teachers try very hard to please program managers, look to them for leadership.... I was not received too warmly here. It was lonely for a time until we did some trust building activities and we got to know each other. I told the Project Director when I saw how things were, we would have to do that. You build the trust first and then you build on the trust. So we would have to take time to do some things to get trust. *[Program Manager, School F, 2-77]*

Hence the advice:

> *ADVICE: There is no short-cut that allows developmental change to occur in schools without a solid base on which to build. "You build the trust first and then you build on the trust." Expect, therefore, that even if rehiring gives the opportunity to inject more skilled leadership, time will be needed to adjust to the change in leader, in and of itself.*

## Mutual Accommodation Between People and Roles

*ADVICE: Avoid weakening key functions in the inevitable process of mutual accommodation between people and roles.*

The major recruitment activity and opportunity to make new appointments was at Project level--the filling of critical leadership and support positions in PSP. Experience suggests, however, that management design for such a project will generally derive not just from an understanding of what the project is to accomplish, but also from appraisal of the talents and interests of key personnel involved in the design who are slated for leadership in implementing it. Such mutual accommodations are practical, even desirable, so long as they assure the performance of the critical functions required for effective implementation.

The original PSP management design incorporated such attention to functions, roles and people. However, by the end of the first year, there was evidence of changes in staff in which roles and functions were not only reallocated but changed in nature. It is judged that these accommodations solved some problems at the expense of diluting some critical leadership needs of the PSP in ensuing years.

Conflict. A comparison of organizational management structures in Year 1 and Year 2 reminds us of the shift in line positions discussed in Chapter 5 (see Figure 8 below). The Manager of School Programs and the Manager of Staff Support Services were the most pivotal leadership positions. The latter role was filled by the person who directed the proposal/plan development effort and the role meshed well with his interests and strong capabilities in the personnel development area.

By the end of Year 1, these situations had arisen:*

1. There was conflict between resource coordinators and program managers over relative authority in the development, support and monitoring of school programs.

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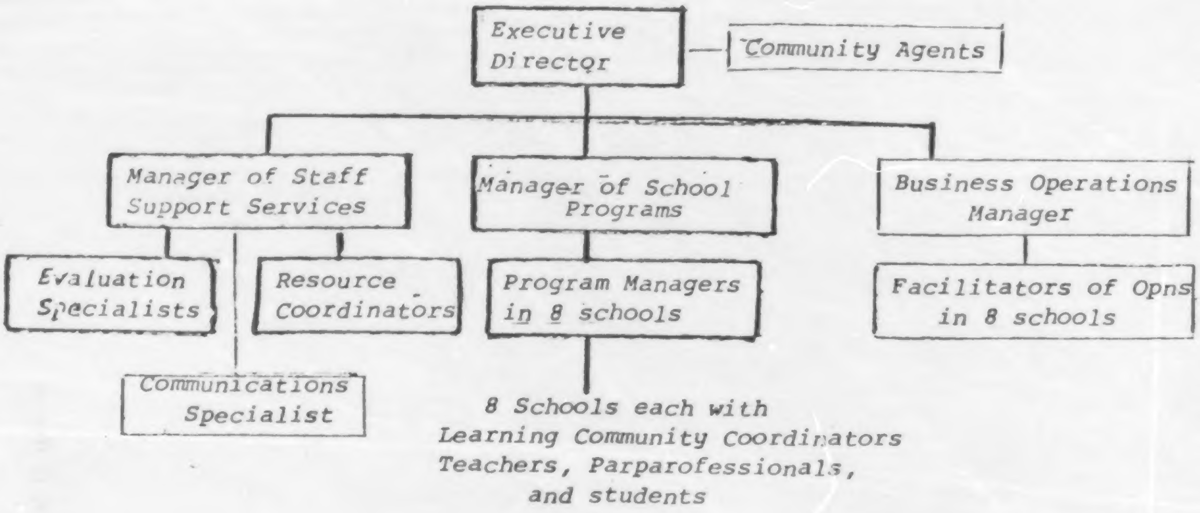
*This account is a summary reconstruction of what occurred, based upon review of early field records and interviews with key personnel in Year 4 and Year 5.

PSP YEAR 1


Executive Director
Community Agents
Manager of Staff Support Services
Manager of School Programs
Business Operations Manager
Evaluation Specialists
Resource Coordinators
Program Managers in 8 schools
Facilitators of Opns in 8 schools
Communications Specialist
8 Schools each with Learning Community Coordinators Teachers, Parparofessionals, and students

PSP YEAR 2

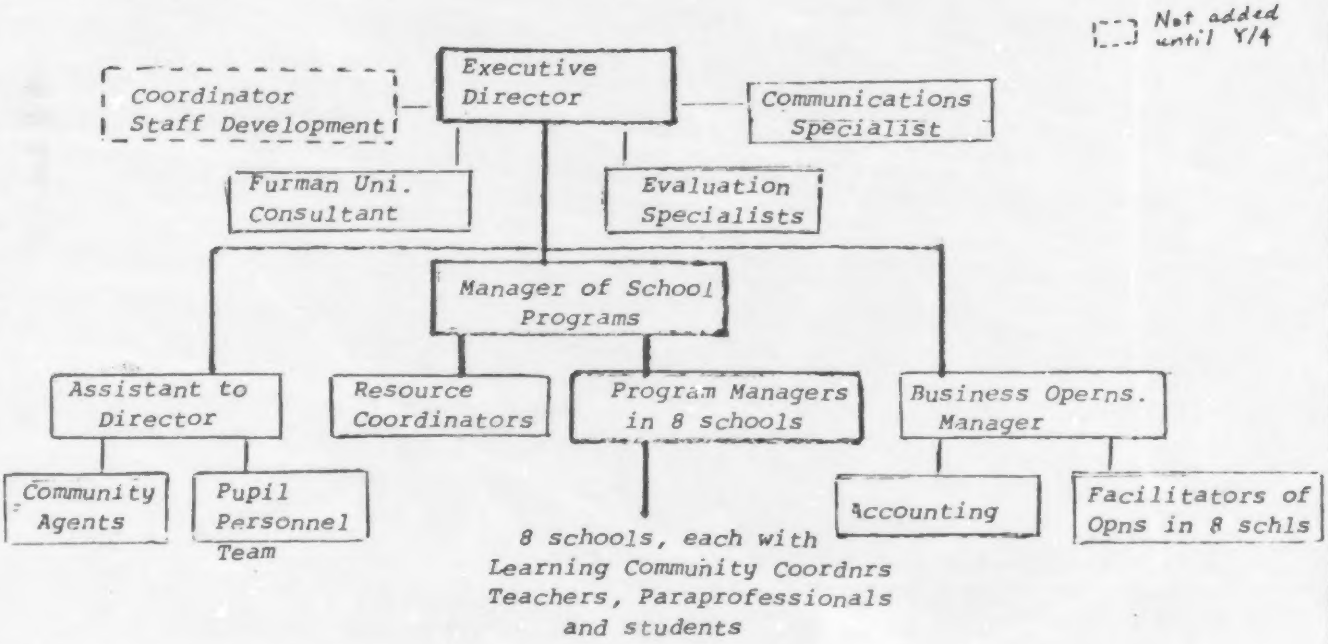

Not added until Y/4
Coordinator Staff Development
Executive Director
Communications Specialist
Furman Uni. Consultant
Evaluation Specialists
Manager of School Programs
Assistant to Director
Resource Coordinators
Program Managers in 8 schools
Business Operns. Manager
Community Agents
Pupil Personnel Team
Accounting
Facilitators of Opns in 8 schls
8 schools, each with Learning Community Coordnrs Teachers, Paraprofessionals and students

Figure 13: PSP Project-Level Organization Charts, Year 1 and Year 2

2. There was conflict between the Manager of Staff Support Services and the Manager of School Programs related to the above, and perceived conflict between the views of the latter and the Furman Liaison consultant.
3. The Business Manager supervised the building and facilitator of operations aspects of the PSP. However, by training and disposition he did not play a full leadership role in budgetary and related project tasks which would usually fall within the business management area.*
4. The Executive Director became overburdened with demands associated with responsibilities as an area administrator at a time of high administrative activity in the district (desegregation, rezoning, program and personnel changes, general responsibilities of area administration).
5. Three people left the organization at senior level: Manager of School Programs, Manager of Staff Support Services, and Furman Liaison Consultant.

The first PSP Director, looking back on that time, conveyed some of the flavor of the situation (confirmed by other sources):

> Resource coordinators found it difficult to perceive of themselves as anything but supervisors of the program aspects. The program managers were very opposed to the coordinators telling them how to do something. They kind of pushed the coordinators aside in the beginning because that's what they were afraid would happen. The resource coordinators, on the other hand, became sort of defensive and isolated themselves at first. They generally 'talked to themselves' with a few exceptions.
>
> I think more had to do with interpersonal problems that developed among the management team inside the project office. I just never would have guessed that all the problems that did come about would have happened. It was unreal!... People wanted to occupy the same roles they had before the project started. [PSP Dir., Years 1 and 2, interviewed 1-76, Year 4]

*Conflict management*. Personalities, roles, functions, authority, responsibility--all were fair game during the conflict. Role clarification and conflict resolution type processes were used effectively under the leadership of an external consultant, and there was timely and insightful input from a Level I Evaluation Report on role perceptions in PSP. This marshalling of human resources (staff development and evaluation) was a commendable achievement, illustrating how indeed such support services could be utilized effectively to address problems arising in implementation--which is what they were intended to do. Ironically, the organizational changes that followed diminished, we judge, this capacity for effective concerted action.

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*The Business Manager, the only Black in central management staff, had been wooed by the Project away from teaching in one of the local schools, initially to help in the planning phase, and then was persuaded to stay on as part of the central PSP group.

The conflicts were partly role-related and partly interpersonal and it was difficult for people to disentangle the two under the stress of implementing a complex project. One of the main achievements of the role clarification process was to sort some of that out.

> Most people got to where they could recognize the fact that "it's not the individual I don't like, it's the role", or "it's not the role I don't like, it's the individual." I think that is progress! It's something we have never gotten to in the rest of the district. [PSP Dir., Years 1 and 2, interviewed 1-76 = Year 4]

Reorganization. The organizational solutions reached for Year 2 are reflected in the revised organizational chart (Figure 8). "The position of Manager of Staff Support Services was deemed unnecessary and the salary for this position was transferred to the position of Administrative Assistant" to the Project Director.* The Manager of School Programs role was redefined. The incumbent resigned and was replaced by a man who had extensive experience in administration of federal-state project relations, plus some interest and background in instruction, but who was not widely viewed as "an instructional person". The position, as redefined, involved more power and responsibility than in the original conception. It called for working with resource coordinators as well as program managers (a move to resolve the conflict issue noted above); additionally (not suggested by the chart), the new man was assigned a particularly heavy writing role in the refunding and final reporting process. Not surprisingly, he spent very little time in schools.

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*PSP, Final Report, Sn. 7, p. 12. Note that the Manager of Staff Support Services who left PSP at this point, became the leader, planner, and first principal of a new elementary school in the district, of which the superintendent (and others) said "it's just like a PSP school"--supported by observation and data from the Transference Program (Ch. 7) of which that school became a part.

Action taken at the end of Year 1 thus tackled head on some of the role conflicts which had arisen and led to reconciliations and increased understanding among some staff; and it removed much of the county-related burden from the shoulders of the Project Director. The price of the budgetary and organizational solutions, however, was the dissolution not only of the role, but of some of the critical functions of the Manager of Staff Support Services, and the overburdening of the Manager of School Programs. At this point in PSP history there was weakened capacity to perform key leadership functions in staff development and, to some extent, in curriculum and instruction. We judge, too, that Level I evaluation and staff development, viewed as critical support services, were never again deployed together as effectively as when they focused on role perceptions and role clarification early in the Project.

Changes in project directors. After these early changes, the organizational structure remained stable during the Project, with the addition of nonline positions for Coordinator of Transference and Coordinator of Staff Development (Years 4 and 5). However, there were three Executive Directors over the life of PSP--the first for Years 1 and 2, the second for Years 3 and 4, and the third for Year 5.* Each had experience with PSP and the District before assuming the directorship, and this to some extent smoothed the transitions. However, the discontinuity in leadership was felt in the Project. Each shift meant some readjustment time--time to learn to trust new people and develop relationships, time to adjust to different styles and capabilities. These quotes from area and school level staff are illustrative:

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*The first had been Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education and helped write the proposal and plan for PSP. He left to become Associate Superintendent for Program at District level. (By Year 5 he had moved to become superintendent in another South Carolina school district.) The second had been Furman University Liaison-Elementary during PSP Year 2. The third had been District Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education for several years and was involved in the initial PSP proposal effort. Both the second and third directors left to take higher professional positions outside the state.

> - All three [directors] had the same philosophy and I think that has been excellent. Ideally it would have been better if the first director had stayed for five years, or if Z had stayed. All three have been outstanding people. But it's better to have continuity from one than to have the three changes. They were all good on managing people and the philosophy of the Project. [Area staff person, 6-77]
> - ...We look to that person for leadership.... If we don't have flexibility, we can't adjust to the changes.... Take PSP. Each director had a different background. The third is an instructional person. The others were not. I have felt very comfortable working with all of them. But it makes a difference in the faculty...In writing things for our self-study... our teachers agreed that it was hard having all these program managers plus three different directors for the project. [Program Manager, 2-77]

We note that the organizational solutions found at the end of Year 1 not only diminished for a time the leadership in staff development, but they weakened to some extent the leadership in instructional development--for neither the first two Executive Directors nor the second Manager of School Programs was perceived as "an instructional person". Again, the roles were in some measure accommodated to the people who filled them.

In Year 5, a third Executive Director came on board who had a strong background in curriculum, educational innovation, and district administration. However, at this point in PSP history, readjustments in roles were not likely to be made. His comments on staffing at Project level affirm some of the adjustments and costs suggested above. "If I could do it over," he said...

> I would look very critically at the staff of the Area Office [=PSP]. X had strengths and Y had strengths and I assume I have strengths. But we all have a bag of strengths that are different. While I know what the Executive Director is supposed to do on paper, a lot depends on how well every other person in a critical role performs his job description. I

> think it is equally important that people in this particular office recognize that their strengths and weaknesses are not the same.
>
> The team that is developing between [Manager of School Programs] and myself.... My background and experience is curriculum more than administration. He has had both but mainly administration. But his primary responsibility here is curriculum. It's the place I have a hard time to keep my mouth shut! If I were not new on board... [PSP, Dir. Year 5, 6-77]

In effect, mutual understandings were reached, and the two worked well together; but the relative assignment of functions was not optimal for the Project.

What can we learn from the experience sketched above?

*ADVICE:*

- *In a situation calling for people to perform in new roles, there will be stress. It will take time to learn the new roles and there are likely to be misunderstandings and conflict. Be prepared to diagnose and surface such problems early and invest in processes to help people understand each other and to clarify the new roles.*
- *Expect that where, as in PSP, there is real commitment to humanizing organizations (whether schools or the structures of administration) there will be need to reach mutual adaptation of roles and people who have varying strengths. Be on the alert when reorganizing or redefining roles not to weaken functions critical to achieving project goals.*
- *Compatibility of personality and skill in interpersonal relations should receive as much attention in hiring members of a management team as professional knowledge and technical skills.*
- *Above all, in assessing strengths in relation to functions, assure that there is effective staff development focused on key leadership and support positions at area and building level.*

These guidelines for productive working relationships at administrative levels of the school system closely parallel the understandings reached in our discussion of teacher teaming (Chapter 3). The identification, development and maintenance of the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed at all levels of the system is the challenge of staff development.

## D. INNOVATORS--INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE THROUGH STAFF DEVELOPMENT

> I would put the money into staff development. As to equipment and materials and so on, if you don't have people knowing what to do, you defeat your purpose. *[Program Manager, School B, 6-77]*

PSP planners understood the criticality of staff development in the innovative process, and both participants and external observers generally rated the Project highly in that area. Chapter 4 discusses the history and effectiveness of staff development. Here we are concerned only to highlight what PSP experience has to teach about successes and pitfalls. Asked for advice to others engaging in systemic change, the Year 5 Director said:

> It is crucial to have *[staff development]* strategies geared to the needs for the process of phasing in and then for phasing out dependence on external support monies. I would take a very hard look at the thoroughness with which the group explored staff development and the importance attached to it. Is there somebody capable, sensitive, well-organized, well informed, to head this up? Is there a mechanism or process for really involving staff inputs and for evaluating the mesh between staff development and performance needs? Is there coherence in the strategy or just sets of "good things" that don't fit into an overall plan? *[PSP Dir., Year 5, 12-76]*

Some aspects of this summative statement are worth further discussion here.

### Importance of a Sound Planning Process

> *ADVICE: The staff development program will be most effective in supporting systemic change if it has these characteristics (among others):*
>
> *-It is assigned a capable leader/coordinator to manage the planning process, assure good communication, and organize the activities.*
>
> *-The planning process is continuous and participatory rather than sporadic and autocratic. There should be a functional mechanism for assuring inputs from target groups, including teachers, administrators and support staff.*
>
> *-It is based upon a clear understanding of overall goals and recurring assessment of performance needs related to those goals.*

*-It provides for all phases of development associated with behavior change, from initial information and awareness through to opportunities for practice, feedback, and reinforcement of new practices.*

Goals. Staff development is not an end in itself. It derives its importance and coherence from an understanding of the overall goals of the enterprise--in this case systemic change in education. PSP achieved a high degree of clarity about overall goals and components of innovation in its Proposal/Plan (1972), and initial staff development was a direct attempt to translate those goals in terms of the understandings, dispositions, knowledge and skills needed for implementation. Yet for part of the life of the Project staff development had, so to speak, its heart in the right place, but with some slippage in relating some of the "good things" that happened in staff development to overall goals and performance evaluation on a continuing basis. In the last two years of the Project, there was steady improvement in terms of assigned leadership and planning and by Year 5 staff development had reached its most organized and sophisticated level. Experience teaches that a plan (such as PSP 1972 plan) is no substitute for an ongoing planning process that provides for continuing attention to overall goals, relates staff development activities to performance review, and assures follow-on through the various stages of staff development needed to change educational practice (see Chapter 4).

Participant inputs. There should be strong, smoothly functioning mechanisms for assuring communication about staff development needs and opportunities, with practitioners involved in the planning and evaluation process. Such inputs can enrich the process and assure its responsiveness to target groups. Without them staff may well feel no ownership of the activities and find ways to boycott them.

> ...My first year at Greer Middle School *[PSP Year 2]* most of the staff development activities were suggested by someone other than our staff members. Participation was almost forced ...Someone said: "Why don't you ask us what we want and maybe participation will go up..." The most effective staff development activities we have had--the best attended and the ones that received the best evaluation *[by school staff]* have been the ones suggested, planned and carried out by consultants suggested by our school's IIC..." *[Program Manager, Middle School, 12-76]*

> ...Staff development for program managers was a kind of hodgepodge. Many teacher activities were open to them. Those planned specifically for them, and some were, were mostly not suggested by the program mangers themselves.... There were things that were very good but not what we asked for... *[A Program Manager, 6-77]*

As we shall point out below, self-assessments of "needs" should not be the only source of inputs on staff development strategies and activities; such inputs are necessary but sometimes not sufficient to relate activities to the goals for systemic change, particularly in early phases. However, target group participation in planning is essential for the effectiveness and cohesiveness of the enterprise, for honing planning skills that can be used at school level, and for relating school planning to system/area-wide goals and activities. By Year 5, several PSP schools had developed sophisticated capabilities for planning and implementing their in-house staff development, while Project-wide activities were planned and coordinated through the mechanism of an area Staff Development Committee--the structure of which is commended to others.

> ...We have come so far here. The Staff Development Committee I would have from the very beginning. It is a representative body and will be continued. One person is selected or appointed from each school, one from the Project Instructional Improvement Committee [ a program manager ], one from the resource coordinators. This Committee evolved in spring of Year 4 because there were needs for communication, and they identified their purposes and started to function. This year I realized that some people were left out--resource coordinators and facilitators, so we had those places in the committee this year. This is a tremendous idea... *[Question: Are there costs?]*...You need released time. Eventually you may need some equipment. *[Year 5 Staff Development Coordinator, 6-77]*

## What Kind of Staff Development, Where, When, and How?

Given a clear understanding of the overall goals and objectives of the innovation, the planning process has to address the questions: What kinds of staff development, for whom, where, and when, and how, will promote these goals? In-service in school systems frequently appears to answer these questions without really asking them. The answers, assumed from what occurs, are often of this order: staff development is for teachers; it takes place in workshops led by outside consultants on in-service days; its goals are whatever the objectives are for the workshops. The activities often have a haphazard take-it-or-leave-it quality: "good things" presented without adequate follow-through, and without a sense of where they fit in an overall coherent plan or strategy. PSP did not completely avoid such pitfalls but, on the whole, PSP experience demonstrates a different set of answers to the questions: What kind of staff development, for whom, where, when, how, will promote systemic change.

What kind of staff development?--"needs" assessments. We noted above the importance of taking account of target group self-assessments of staff development needs. Yet people are not always able to specify what their needs are accurately--especially in situations involving much stress and complex problems.

> ...X School...So many problems.... They didn't have the right kind of staff development for them.... They don't know what they need. All they know is where their pain is... *[PSP staff member, 6-77]*

Pain is a symptom, not a cause. Recall the tensions and conflict which arose during Year 1, associated with roles, authority-responsibility lines, personalities, and the sheer fatigue and stress of getting a major project under way in a too-much-too-fast fashion. People had differeng perceptions of the nature of the problem and what "needed" to be done. In such situations it becomes particularly important to diagnose the nature of "the problem" and "the needs".

- Is the problem that people don't know or understand what to do?
  - Then we are in the area of knowledge (and goal clarification).
- Is the problem that people know what to do but not how to do it?
  - Then we are in the area of skills (e.g., managing open classrooms or an individualized instruction program).
- Is the problem that people know what to do and how to do it, but don't want to do it?
  - Then we are in the domain of motivation (note the general psyching-up value of the "Banquet of '72" and the "Retreat of '77").
- Is the problem technical or interpersonal or both?
  - We have to treat it accordingly (technical training, value clarification, interpersonal skills, moving people...)
- Is the problem that people have the knowledge and the know-how but features of their work situation inhibit exercising the competency?
  - Then we are in the area of examining and modifying aspects of the context of work (e.g., arranging schedules so team members can plan together).

Whatever the diagnosis of "needs" in a particular situation, there are "needs" that derive from the nature of the planned innovation itself, calling for attention to building self-concept of staff; to promoting community--skills in interpersonal relations; to knowledge and skills associated with new curricula and organizational arrangements; to philosophy undergirding the project; to instructional, decision-making and evaluation skills.... Decisions have to be made about which components of staff development all staff need, which can be left to individual choice, and which should be individualized by school or by teacher (or other) groupings determined by performance review. The decisions parallel those made in instructional programs where there is a commitment to individualization and involve similar questions of pacing, learning mode and learning cycle.

As we noted in Chapter 4, unless there is continuing attention to overall goals, it is likely that the goals considered important will be inferred by the focus of staff development. PSP, for example, was weak on staff development in the areas of evaluation, decision-making, and community involvement, though these were major components of the overall design. Also, experience suggests that on-line people will tend to favor staff development that deals with "nitty gritty", "practical" instructional skills or materials and tend not to identify a "need" for philosophy, affective development, and "putting it all together"--integrating components and building community. This raises the question, confronted in PSP, of mandatory vs. voluntary staff development.

In the summer prior to Year 1, staff development was elaborate, comprehensive, and it was required for everybody who worked in the schools. It was of high quality but at the same time energy-draining, partaking of the too-much-too-fast characteristic of early implementation.* Possibly in reaction

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*"We tried eight weeks of in-service the first summer, and we were worn out when we came to school. Our minds were filled with a lot of fantastic ideas but our energy was gone. The first year we probably made more mistakes just from sheer fatigue. If we had had a year of absorbing and implementing, interactions, etc. we might have been more successful...." *[PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*

to this, but also because of lack of an assigned leader and a strong planning process for staff development, PSP moved to a more voluntary stance in Years 2 and 3, assuming that "people know what they need". Participation in planning at this point was translated as "let the staff decide what they need" even while some felt that "staff don't always know what they need". Asked what she would advise if she had it to do over, the Year 4 Staff Development Coordinator responded: "I did get a chance to do it over in the Transference Program." What was learned from experience was the need to blend carefully the required and the voluntary, the prescriptive and the responsive activities of staff development in a systemic change program.

> We had two kinds of staff development plans represented by the Project. One we used for our own teachers. We had noboby to turn to, nobody close by to observe. So we had a staff development plan more in terms of "tell us what you need and we will try to get it." But this assumes that people know what they need. We offered a bunch of things and let people sign up...
>
> In the Transference plan we decided "We know some things everyone needs" and we wrote up a series of activities that everybody would have to go through to receive information [Phase I]. Then, for schools that elected to continue into impelmentation [Phase II] we emphasized their chosen representatives going through everything. Then we started phasing in "Tell us what you need".
>
> So now we have not only "Tell us what you want" but also those things that are required. [Year 4 Staff Development Coordinator, 12-76]

Note that what is required is heavily weighted in terms of developing knowledge and skills in processes, and understanding how the various components fit together.

> *ADVICE ON ASSESSING NEEDS: Expect that staff development that is effective in promoting the goals of systemic change will not be synonymous with what practitioners perceive their needs to be. It will be a blend of prescribed activities derived from goals and performance review, and activities responsive to individual and group perceptions of their needs. It will attend to needs for knowledge, for skills, and for motivation; to program needs and people needs. The participatory planning process should facilitate a melding of perspectives on "needs".*

Staff Development, where, when, and how? In brief, PSP experience attests that staff development must be a pervasive commitment and presence throughout the system: involving system-wide, school-wide, learning community and person specific opportunities for learning; and involving practitioners both as learners and as purveyors of staff development. At the most developed levels, staff development becomes something that people do deliberately for each other and for themselves, where they are--in learning community, staffroom, school, or outside workshops; it assures that there is progression from the point of awareness of new beliefs and practices through to the point of behavior change; and it "puts it all together" in terms of innovation components and in terms of building community among people.

> Where it has to happen is in a building. Staff development of the most relevant nature is at building level. In PSP there are eight schools--eight unique entities. In our school we've attended Project activities and moved increasingly to doing it ourselves. Not a teflon idea of education where nothing sticks .... Every learning community has to conduct a staff development session for the rest of the staff once a year and that's been a super activity because everybody goes down to that person's learning community bringing exactly what they do: cross-pollination. Everybody finds out other teams are doing a great job. Respect and morale go up. There are good psychological strokes and they feel wonderful. And because they are feeling good psychologically, they can give strokes to other people....
>
> It's like training people to become their own therapists. Train people to become their own in-service and staff development leaders. This staff does workshops around the country.... We push them out the door doing things.... It revitalizes.... [Program Manager, School C, 6-77]

## Staff Development for Whom? Don't Forget the Administrators

The strongest message conveyed in response to "staff development for whom?" is "Everyone! Especially, don't forget the administrators and the area level staff."

> We have fallen into the same model as a larger district office: In-service is for those people out there and not for people in house [i.e., area personnel]. There should be a clear-cut design of these kinds of things for in-house people so that skills can be constantly upgraded and renewed and so people can be as highly productive in their role as they expect teachers to be. [Year 5 PSP Director, 12-76]

Attention to the continuing development of top management and support staff and to team building at that level, is particularly important when, as happened in PSP, accommodations are made between roles and people. As to the kinds of staff development needed for administrators, the range is similar to that for other staff members: personal, interpersonal, programmatic, but with greater emphasis on leadership skills--skills in developing and managing programs, in managing time and budget, in developing participatory planning and decision-making, in relating to staff and helping their development.

The heavy weight of advice proffered focused on staff development for program managers; but a few people (program managers mainly) emphasized the need for leadership training at central project/area level as essential if these people are to support building leaders. It should not be assumed that, even with care in hiring, people in central management and support positions have all the appropriate skills and attitudes and need no help in building and sustaining them. "If I were running a project like this..."

> ...I would talk to my staff development coordinator about the kind of people it takes to make an organization go.... I would use Perley, Maslow...get them to read. Give them opportunities to learn the characteristics of a successful administrator: feels good about himself, works with people in positive ways, sees his roles as freeing, not restricting...and so on. It would have been psychologically elevating to have people over there [area staff] say: "I am here to help you" and see things from an empathetic point of view. We need people who find their own authentic way of getting things done. *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*

"If I could do it over," said the Year 5 Staff Development Coordinator:

> ...I would have begun working with principals from the beginning. They need a very organized staff development training program in which we bring in people and work with them on self-concept activities, activities dealing with human awareness, awareness of others. The whole concept of their self-growth--values clarification, transactional analysis--every kind of philosophy involving human growth. Reality therapy. Human potential.... Once working with the growth of a person, give him training in time management, leadership skills, how to conduct IIC meetings, how to go through an agenda.... *[Year 5 Staff Development Coordinator]*

As to how program managers perceived their needs, by the end of the Project their perspectives were broad.*

> ...I know one person can't be all of everything. I think program managers or principals need help in curriculum and in management of time and space and budgeting and all that. But along with that you need to develop some leadership skills in a person. And interpersonal relations--with staff, community, administration.... Shared decision-making was difficult for many, especially in large schools.... In training principals that would have to be hit... *[A Program Manager, 6-77]*

Investment in program manager development became understood (somewhat late in the Project) as a linchpin in the staff development system, with large payoff throughout the schools.

> They could do it in their schools. This approach to staff development is the most effective we have had: When we train a group of high calibre people and they in turn serve as trainers. Train your building principal and one or two teachers and let them train the rest... *[Year 5 Staff Development Coordinator, 6-77]*

Administrator staff development needs and the mandatory-voluntary issue. With building leaders as with teachers, practitioners do not always define their needs in ways consonant with the goals for systemic change. Some program managers were recalcitrant about participating in staff development activities.

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*Lest it be thought that the heavy emphasis on interpersonal relations (with personal growth a requisite for that) is simply a PSP bias, note the results of a 1980 survey in Pennsylvania. Three hundred and thirty building administrators completed questionnaires and 120 participated in in-depth interviews about their professional needs. The top three needs identified were: learning how to motivate; instructional leadership and training; and developing personnel. (Behind those came time management, managing change, community development, team building, communication, making decisions, community relations, managing faculty and staff relations, managing differences, group dynamics.) Fifty percent said that their number one headache was faculty and staff relations; next came time management.

> Very little was designed for Project-wide people. In Year 3 we realized we needed more in this area. Some managers have been timid about using in-services and some had to be browbeaten a bit. Two program managers in particular had to be forced into some things--for example, to take the course taught for transference people on the role of the administrator in comprehensive change. It was suggested very strongly to them one year and mandated the following year because they had not taken it up. *[Manager, School Programs, 6-77]*

### Building Community at Area Level

Assuring multi-dimensional staff development in line with Project goals throughout the vertical structures of the system--from area people to building leaders to teachers and back up through these levels--helps build one type of integration in the system. Another kind of integration may be conceived as horizontal. The emphasis within schools on building teams and staff cohesiveness has its parallel at area level. This was a weak spot in PSP. Just as staff development for area people was relatively weak, so, too, cohesiveness at area level was weak. It was not a focus of deliberate attention and we judge that this diminished the group potential of individually dedicated and capable people.

> - There's a lot of distance between us as human beings.... If you looked at us as individuals, you would say we are good people on an individual basis. When we come together as a group we're not that good because we're inhibited.... *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*
> - You need to build a cohesive group not only within a school but with your peers.... It doesn't mean necessarily you are personal friends. But you are professional peers.... You build respect, build trust with your peers. By workshops and so on.... It is frustrating when you feel program managers are not together--that you cannot disagree without being disagreeable.... I am sick of 'We Agree' sessions!... *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*

As we saw in Chapter 5, the Project-level committees did serve to increase communication and to promote more openness than found in other parts of the District, but they fell far short of potential in building cohesiveness and team spirit. There was little in the way of deliberate efforts to that end.

PSP experience suggests that if integration and cohesiveness are judged important (and in systemic change they must be), then they must be lifted up as important goals and deliberate staff development take place to promote them.

The formal committee structures could be part of a strategy to build area-level cohesiveness--given capable leadership and integration of the group as an overt goal. Other formal vehicles of staff development include workshops, planning sessions, and retreats. The retreat strategy was apparently not utilized until the end of the Project. Some suggested it earlier as a personal skill-building mechanism.

> What most of us program managers wanted was training sessions in an isolated area--intense training that a business executive goes through as part of regular training. We felt this was a number one priority.... But it was always turned down. *[Question: By whom?]* -- By Washington. If you are going to be an instructional person as well as run the school and have an open door policy, then managing time and budget and things is very important--either somebody will manage it for you or you have to manage it... *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*

The cost-benefit ratio for such a retreat would be substantially greater if the skill-building purpose were yoked to the goal of building group cohesiveness, with activities incorporated to that end.

'Retreat', as used here, is a temporary withdrawing from the scene of action to reflect with others upon that action and upon relationships. The aim is that people may return to the fray with greater understanding of each other and of joint purposes. In a demanding systemic-change project, the need for such withdrawal might occur more often in the early period. For example, in PSP, when the conflict of roles and personalities was first diagnosed in area level relationships.

Regular retreats of area level people during the implementation process could be used for mutual debriefing on prior experience--reflection on what has been learned from experience, discussion of joint action on mutual concerns in the ensuing period, and social and formal activities to build relationships. For example, the annual two-week mandatory in-service at each school could be parallelled by an annual two-day mandatory retreat for area level staff, with each of these annual activities complemented during the year by workshops and group meetings which together would build group cohesiveness as well as accomplish planning and program activities of common concern.

Some such integrative staff development strategy must pervade the system in a project whose purpose is integrated systemic change; and some such strategy is necessary for continuing renewal once project status ends.

At the end of PSP Year 5, a retreat was organized for area people as one part of the effort to ease the transition from Federal project status into the District mainstream. Project-wide people were brought together in a setting where there was informal social interaction as well as group sharing facilitated by an outside consultant. A similar retreat took place subsequently for a larger group including former PSP principals and those from the other twelve or so schools which would make up the post-PSP area of the School District. One can only speculate what the payoff might have been had such strategies to build group cohesiveness been used recurrently throughout the Project period. Various people interviewed in June of Year 5 volunteered comments:

- The retreat...I wish we'd had this kind of thing all along.... We are still reluctant to socialize... *[A PSP Program Manager, 6-77]*
- I don't think they used the retreat strategy for planning. I wish we had built it in from the beginning. I feel so much closer to them after that experience... *[Area staff person, 6-77]*
- They've come a long way. The group this weekend was great. I just wish we were doing more of this kind of retreat activity. A lot of good things were said as far as talking about "how I have perceived you." Some real sharing and communication going on. This morning when I came in there was a group of very smiling people, glad to see each other and get on with the task.... We still have a long way to go. The key there is the area superintendent. We have the people in the group answering to him and this will determine how far the group goes. In the school IIC it's the principal; if he is a leader the school will go. In the area, it's the area superintendent; if he is a leader the group will go. *[Area staff person, 6-77]*

"What will most influence the retention of PSP innovation?"

> The main thing will be the building principal and keeping him excited and moving. If you can have your Executive Director [Area Superintendent] and resource coordinator and one consultant and principals meeting together and working through how we can continue to share ideas and continue to do staff training, there is no question the project will be able to continue. There is need to stress leadership at the area level. [Area staff person, 6-77]

From this discussion we derive some advice.

> *ADVICE: Invest in leadership at area and building levels if you want staff development to be a pervasive force in the system. If you want cohesiveness and integration across schools and among area staff, make that an explicit goal and invest in activities that will build cohesiveness as well as skills in the group of area staff and principals.*

## E. INTEGRATION AND COMMUNITY

### Intentionality

Basic requisites for "getting it all together" in systemic change are the intention and commitment to do so, and the support that will sustain the implementation process over time. The Federal agency (OE, then NIE) made such a commitment and so did the School District of Greenville County in its Piedmont Schools Project. USOE/NIE required nothing less than a "systemic strategy of change" and backed its conviction with financial support over five years. In return the Federal agency required that the Project sustain a holistic approach to change and that its external evaluation convey the "interrelated, integrated entity called the Piedmont Schools Project".* PSP, for its part, developed a vision of a "Better Way in Education" and translated it into five years of solid effort to change the instructional environment of the Piedmont schools. To push beyond the conventional wisdom of educational practice and the conventional wisdom of evaluation research was a high risk venture for both Federal and local agencies. The commitment to "bring it all together" was critical. Even when we fall short of realizing them fully, our visions and intentions are a lode star bringing some convergence and integrity to the plethora of activities involved in innovating.

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*In 140 tightly packed, single-spaced pages of the 1975 evaluation RFP there was delineated (in unprecedented detail) a Federal design for study of major components in the last two years of the Project, without any specification of how to "analyze the interrelated integrated entity". The intention, however, was very clear: We're interested in the whole more than the parts." This perspective runs counter to a prevailing orientation of evaluation and research in education which favors specialized analysis of components over multi-disciplinary synthesis.

PSP maintained throughout a strong allegiance to the holistic vision of what was to be accomplished and to the centrality of human development and relationships in the overall goals and the means to attaining them. Staff frequently referred to "PSP philosophy" to convey commitment to humanistic, personalized, success-oriented education; to "openness" in structures and relationships; to involvement of students and staff and community in processes of decision-making and learning. This overall orientation was a binding agent that helped blend various elements together so that they could be experienced as integrated.

> Multi-aging, differentiated staffing, individualization of instruction, shared decision-making and responsibility--all are coming from the same source, the same Gestalt* and I think that of course it all has to be done together. It all fits together. If it does not it is not because it should not but because you have a problem someplace. [Program Manager, School C, 6-77]

"It all fits together. If it does not, it is not because it should not but because you have a problem someplace." Thus we might approach the idea of 'holistic health' or 'integrity' of persons or groups, or the "interrelated, integrated entity called the Piedmont Schools Project" that NIE was concerned to study. The innovation evolved over time, with accommodations or mutual adaptations occurring that melded many components in a fashion that was distinctively PSP in reality as well as in conception. The original concepts and practices were drawn eclectically from the smorgasbord of innovations which proliferated in the 1960's, based upon their perceived goodness of fit with the goals and purposes of the Project and their apparent compatibility with each other. Yet PSP was not intended as a field test of any of these concepts.* While many features of PSP schools strongly evidence their innovative ancestry, PSP had a unique configuration of features. Thus, in its infancy, the Project was viewed by some as trying to be "IGE more or less"; in its maturity, while still reminding us of its relatives, so to speak, it developed its own strong personality and integrity. A discussion of some aspects of the mutual adaptation or accommodations reached during Project evolution, illustrates the process of integration and the themes of 'integration' and 'community' which we have suggested in this study and which we recall now.

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*Note the meaning of Gestalt: [In Gestalt psychology] "Any of the integrated structures or patterns that make up all experience and have specific properties which can neither be derived from the elements of the whole nor considered simply as the sum of these elements." The elements of PSP innovation when melded together create something distinctive, even when the parts are recognizable--much as a human being is recognizable as such and partakes of the same major elements as other human beings, yet is a distinct person.

Reflection on PSP experience has brought some understandings of 'integration' in the context of systemic change in education. We understand it first to mean what has been called "horizontal integration" of various components of innovation and "vertical integration", referring to consonance of innovation throughout the K-12 levels of the schooling system. This conception, associated with NIE intentions for Experimental Schools projects, focuses upon innovation components and seeks to discover whether they can be brought together in a "compatible, mutually reinforcing structure." A second important and convergent understanding of 'integration' has been reached through reflection on PSP experience. It derives from a focus upon the innovators rather than the innovation--the interactions of people engaged in the innovating process. This is 'integration' in the social sense: the building of community. Both integration of innovation components and integration as the building of community among people are essential to systemic change and are illustrated in varying degrees in PSP implementation experience.

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*There are, of course, rich possibilities for comparing PSP experience with specific new practices with that of other school systems.

### Accommodations During the Conceptual and Planning Phase

While the main focus of attention is the process of implementing innovation, some insights can be derived from a brief recollection of components dropped and added during the initial conceptualizing and planning phase.

Components dropped. The original vision of PSP was on an even grander scale than described in Chapter Two. The vision included elements that were rejected or substantially modified during planning and negotiation but which confirm the breadth of social integration conceived by those who designed the Project.

An idea that never reached the point of incorporation in a firm proposal was the use of the Piedmont site as a locus for integrated delivery of social services. The idea of financing broad health, recreation and other social services with the support and cooperation of multiple government agencies was discussed with HEW/Atlanta early in planning. The fire was rekindled later but died, apparently for lack of follow-through.*

The initial vision that "the entire community will become the 'school' for the Project" and the development of a Year-Round School were severely toned down during negotiation. While interaction between school and community remained in the plan, its extent was much curtailed. An add-on amount was given to explore the feasibility of the Year-Round School. This was studied and a decision reached not to implement the concept.

These ideas, had they been translated into reality, would have meant a more pervasive presence of the schools in the community and the community in the schools--greater social integration. They would also no doubt have increased the strain of implementation. They are noted here because they illustrate the breadth of holistic vision that lay behind the Project, and because these elements are potentially capable of incorporation in a subsequent wave of innovation.

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*Early in October 1971, three of the people involved in proposal development, including the Superintendent, discussed possibilities with HEW/Atlanta. A brief note in early field records suggests that Greenville County Health Department had about three-quarters of a proposal written on how to associate an exemplary model for health services delivery with PSP.

A component dropped during negotiations was an elaborate scheme for accountability, incorporating a PPBS-style fiscal management system. "OE didn't want anything to do with that" and no substitute budgeting innovation or accountability mechanism was included in the accepted proposal. One unfortunate consequence was the difficulty in costing out components, given conventional line-item budgets. A Study of Program Allocations and Expenditures concluded:

> PSP did not generate many generalizable conclusions about the financial cost of the educational innovations...[This] is a common problem in experimental studies or demonstrations in educational research. It is difficult to separate out the cost elements. Only if highly detailed budget accounts linking expenditure to functional elements of the experiment are kept from the very outset, will a separation be possible. Of course, this requires planning of the cost study and articulation of the cost questions before the Project is under way. This is an important lesson to learn for the future. [EPRC, Report on Program Allocations and Expenditures, 1978, p. 56]

The watering down of references to accountability throughout the system might explain in part what sometimes seemed to be an easy-going approach to monitoring performance during implementation. The inference is not that "They should have done PPBS"; rather, it is that the system for budgeting and for recording and monitoring resource allocation in an innovative project should be incorporated in the initial design.

Components added. Two elements incorporated in the design at the urging of USOE during the extended negotiations of the planning phase may be noted. One was the Board of Directors. PSP's idea had been to have a consortium of the groups involved in the original design to guide Project implementation. Whether or not this would have been effective and how are moot points. In any event, as part of an emphasis on indigenizing the Project ("Make it your own thing"), USOE pressed for a Board of Directors constituted as described in

Chapter Five. The resulting Board was referred to as "a Board which OE likes but which is weakened in input", and one interviewee said, "I'd love to have the hours we spent trying to figure out what that group ought to do." With hindsight, we could speculate on functions that might have been served in building stronger relations with the District and the broader professional community. The fact remains that PSP did not render this a viable group and everyone appeared relieved when it was mercifully put to rest at the end of the Project period.

A second element added at OE instigation was the role of Manager of School Programs. This did not fit with what PSP designers had in mind when they devised the management structure, for it effectively eliminated many of the responsibilities intended for the Manager of Staff Support Services--a role written in light of skills and interests of the person who spearheaded the design phase. He left the Project after one year and we judged that the adjustments made at that time between people and roles were not optimal for Project leadership.

The point in both examples is not that the ideas were unsound as such; they had much to commend them. But PSP people appeared not to feel strong ownership of the concepts introduced by OE, and fitted them somewhat uneasily into their design. In the one case they were unable (or unwilling) to render the mechanism (BOD/PLC) functional; in the other, they incorporated the role but subsequently diluted its strength by decisions that reassigned personnel and responsibilities.

## Accommodations During Implementation

Earlier discussions have made it clear that various types of accommodation or mutual adaptation occurred during the process of implementation:

-accommodations among pieces of the innovation
-accommodations of innovation to the ecology and history of the schools
-accommodations between people and innovative roles
-accommodations of persons and groups to each other
-accommodations between Project and community and District

Some examples may be recalled briefly at this point within the context of our concern with integration.

Accommodations between programs and philosophy. In Chapter Three we noted that there are many varieties of individualized instruction, some of them more compatible with PSP's philosophies of openness and personalization than others. We saw that the form of individualized program most prevalent in Project schools was diagnostic-prescriptive, heavily influenced by District mandates in reading and math, particularly. Attempts in some schools to push for different approaches with stronger emphasis on student interests and choice were squelched, and variations in which reading for interest was somewhat separated from skill-building were "punished" in the sense that students could do best on the d-p (publisher) tests when they worked (ad nauseum, some would say) with the publisher's reading series and workbooks to which the tests were geared. Hence, an accommodation of PSP to District views was paralleled by accommodation of PSP philosophy to prescribed programs.

D-p individualization calls for well-defined expectations and consistent enforcement of rules by teachers. The conceptually compatible approach to social behavior would be a variant of behavior modification which also emphasizes teacher direction. But PSP espoused a philosophy of openness and Glasser-style reality therapy in which heavy stress is placed upon people taking responsibility for their own choices and actions. Hence the difficulty that teachers were enjoined to maintain one type of communication pattern for academic tasks and another for social behavior. The disjunction or incompatibility of approach was not surfaced as a major problem by PSP personnel; but it was evident that some accommodations were taking place. While there were variations across and within schools, the accommodations reached tended to provide more openness than d-p individualization suggests but less student autonomy than Schools Without Failure approaches would suggest.

Accommodations between community beliefs and promoting learner responsibility. The focus on social behavior illustrates another accommodation--between pervasive community beliefs about child raising, child behavior and "discipline" and the PSP promotion of student responsibility for learning and behavior. As data from the Educational Beliefs Scale (EBS) and the Community/Parental Surveys showed, Greer community and its teachers were relatively conservative in their views of student participation and discipline and control (albeit with a significant minority tending to more openness). By the end of the five years, the community/parents showed relatively high levels of satisfaction and acceptance of innovation, but continued to give clear majority signals that they wanted to feel teachers were in control of learning at all times (Chapter Six). The general pattern of responses to EBS suggests that most teachers shared and/or were responsive to these beliefs. There was thus accommodation between beliefs about discipline and teacher control on the one hand and a full-blown interpretation of "openness" and "student responsibility" on the other--within an overall context of substantial change in instructional settings and practices and a positive and pleasant climate for learning in most learning communities.

Accommodations between innovation and setting. Earlier in this chapter we noted that the pace of implementation varied with the ecology and history of particular schools. "First you build the trust, then you build on the trust" was the tenor of PSP advice, conveying the importance of beginning to build community--integration among members of the innovating team--as a requisite for changing practices. Variation in the pace of change does not, of course, necessarily modify the nature of change (any more than individually paced instruction necessarily means that students do not study the same materials). However, the situations that occasioned a slower pace of change were sometimes also associated with uneasy or even non-implementation of components of the innovation.

For example, High School never implemented open and flexibly used space to any degree and made little inroads on the essentially departmental orientation of courses (individualized short course system widespread, but interdisciplinary work meager). Yet within the conventional structures a "quiet revolution" occurred with broad individualization of instruction, opening up of relationships within the school, and the building of community. There was increased movement of students out into the community as part of the learning process; and youths elsewhere shut out of "normal" schools--the "trainables"--found a home in the sheltered workshops and community organization of High School.*

Trade-off in components? It might be argued with some plausibility that a viable and constructive trade-off in components was made at High School, given its history and social context. Middle School illustrates another kind of accommodation that is less easy to accept, but also less easy to discuss judgmentally.

Middle School students, perhaps more than any other group, would benefit from multi-age grouping and the PSP philosophy of openness operationalized in terms of instructional and social interactions. This is because of the particular characteristics of cognitive, physical and psycho-social growth of young adolescents. Yet Middle School in some ways was semi-traditional in approaches within a radically innovative building. Learning communities were not multi-aged/multi-graded, nor was there an advisee system cutting across the lock-step, age-graded structure. The teacher-dominant patterns that prevailed in relation to social behavior in PSP which, at elementary level, were nonetheless associated with a pleasant environment, were judged by observers to produce a less congenial climate for learning in some Middle School communities. Multi-aging was examined, debated and rejected. The decision rested with staff and administrators. Was this a victory for participatory decision-making (a component of PSP innovation) or a defeat for multi-aging (another component of PSP innovation)? Both, we would judge.

In the complex situation of Middle School, many more issues merit attention than can be raised here. We assert simply that the education of young adolescents is the least understood and developed level of formal schooling systems and that PSP partakes of the problems that this situation engenders nationally.* In that overall context, PSP Middle School emerges as more open and innovative than many, but less so than other schools in the PSP family, based on indicators noted in this study.

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*Recall that PSP was the only place in the District where Special Education "trainables" were part of the regular school system. PSP and community argued strongly to keep things that way.

K-12 integration. Middle-High relations illustrate a K-12 aspect of integration. High School, with its traditional physical arrangements and curricular units, presented a foreign environment to students coming out of a history of large open-spaced learning communities and greater spatial mobility. High School staff in the early period complained that incoming students did not know how to behave and made derogatory comments about Middle School education as a preparation for High. An adaptation was made such that Grade 8 communities in Middle began increasingly to take on characteristics of High in physical and curricular arrangements. This eased the transition between the levels of schooling while at the same time reducing the extent to which intended characteristics of PSP learning communities prevailed in Middle School.

There was little evidence of attention to easing the transition from elementary schools to Middle School, although some Middle School learning communities had as many students as a whole elementary school. Program managers, questioned about the transition, conveyed varying, but generally minimal involvement in inter-school discussion about that transition, with some averring that their students were highly adaptable. By the end of PSP, Middle School was largely receiving a population of students who had spent four years in PSP-style elementary schools. How did they fare compared (say) with students entering the area from traditional school backgrounds? And what of students who moved out of PSP schools to different instructional environments elsewhere in the District?

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*It would be possible to derive from PSP experience more insights than conveyed in this document. But the fact remains that there is a dearth of good models to follow in relating innovative practices to what is known about characteristics of young adolescents. /Contrast the plethora of research and tested innovation in elementary schools./ There is need for a strong comparative case studies approach focused on middle schools to illumine ways of improving educational practice at this level of the system. This is an area where attention to multiple dimensions of social policy and services seems particularly needed. Link-up with juvenile justice, probation, health, welfare, substance abuse and other systems dispensing youth policy and programs seems appropriate. The early PSP notion of the community and the school being much more intimately related in integrated delivery of social and instructional services is useful.

The integration that occurred between levels of schooling derived from the important commonality of intentions emphasized earlier--the fact that PSP schools shared a common philosophy, a common plan and intentionality, a binding common purpose. They also shared resource coordinators who moved from school to school attending to particular curricular areas; and staff of different levels shared, to a limited extent, common staff development. Still, there was little evidence of specific focus on building relationships/integration between levels of schooling (elementary, middle, high). This is judged to be the result of weakness in building community across schools, particularly at the admnistrative level. Which brings us back to the theme of integration as community.

## Community

Given weakness at area level in building community among program managers and area level staff (Sn. B+C, above), it is not surprising that questions of transition of students from one school to another were not a focus of attention. Integration, putting the pieces together in the move between schools, was something largely left for students to do--just as, when interdisciplinary orientation to instruction is weak, such integration as takes place between diverse subject matters is something that a student is often left to forge for himself.

On the whole, though, PSP emerges as a victory for humanizing education, for developing positive personal relations, for building community. The process of building community was strongest within learning communities and schools. The many devices used to this end have already been commended--processes and programs that brought people into more frequent and open communication than characteristic of traditional schooling; students and staff interacting more, and more qualitatively, with more and different people because of flexible space and movement, teaming and differentiated staffing, multi-aging, mainstreaming, advisory provisions, committee structures, pervasive staff development.

At Project/area level, integration and community were stronger and evidenced more open communication than in most systems, even while falling somewhat short of potential. Integration, as might be expected, was progressively weaker as we move beyond PSP schools to the community at large--though school-specific involvement and satisfaction was considerable (Chapter Six). Area-level mechanisms for lay and professional involvement tended to be weak. The Board of Directors/Professional Liaison Committee was ineffectual, and the Board of Cooperatives which did serve some useful functions was nonetheless weak as a mechanism for relating PSP to the District at large and the Board of Trustees in particular.

The last two groups potentially might have provided a strong linkage to the rest of the District (through intended relations with the Trustees and with professional education, respectively), but they did not. Communication and community building were at their weakest between the PSP schools and the central administration of the School District. The policy of leaving the experimental schools alone for their own good backfired in some measure. True, there were many constraints upon building community with "The District" or "The County"--mind-sets, diverging decision-making patterns, centralization, regulations, political and economic climate. Yet one is left with a strong sense that neither the District nor the PSP tried very hard to strengthen communication linkages, build bridges, develop community in the sense that we have used the term here. This does not negate the efforts made on both sides in the "Transference Program", but it does point to weakness in the critical link between PSP and central District administration and decision-makers.

The negative climate created by financial problems is not sufficient to account for weakness in the life-line between Project and District. One speculates that intentionality was lacking. Without articulated intent and creative effort to promote Project-District understanding and community over the years of the PSP, relations with "The County" sometimes seemed more tolerated than cultivated. To the outside observer it appeared that the Project and the Superintendent went about their preoccupying and demanding business independently save in times of crisis. When the crisis was external, as when Federal funding was in jeopardy, they pulled together. When it was internal (as in the Superintendent's concern with a new School Board and a referendum, or as in PSP's worries over "phasing out"), efforts on either side to be understood and helped appeared to lack political astuteness and constructive action. Both sides felt misunderstood. The moral seems to be: if you don't build community, it isn't there to build upon when you need it.

## F. CONTINUITY

But PSP in many important ways did build community and it was there to build upon as the schools moved into the post-Project mainstream of the District. There are features that augur favorably for greater spread of PSP-style innovation into educational practice in the District and elsewhere. There was a tremendous investment in people--by Federal government, by District, and most heavily by the sheer effort and energy of the PSP staff themselves. An investment in innovators. Large numbers of people were trained and became experienced in "getting it together". Many developed a strong capacity to learn from experience, to reflect on action and convey their understandings in training others.

"Getting it together" is one way of talking about education in PSP. Each student and staff member was seen as requiring a mix of knowledge and skills and dispositions for rounded development. Abilities to understand self and relate to others were elevated to an unusual degree. Building a strong self-concept is a way of "getting it together" at the level of one person. Relating to others is the beginning of social integration--building positive relationships which enable people to act together. Getting their act together, they can change schools.

Among the payoffs of the "open" philosophy that undergirded PSP was the freeing up of teachers to be more mobile within and outside their schools. Reward structures are notoriously flat in education (tenure and salary tied to years of service rather than performance, and little differentiation of staff) and the incentives to engage in high-risk, energy-draining innovation are not obvious. In open communication and teaming settings, however (as compared with closed and self-contained settings), opportunities for support and appreciation from professional peers increase. Moreover, both school and area staff had expanded opportunities for sharing knowledge and skills beyond the PSP and experienced increasing demand for their services by the end of the Project. Thus there accrued benefits both in terms of professional rewards and job satisfaction for staff, and in terms of the spread of innovation by the mobility of innovators.

- ...I like teachers to share success practices and walk in each other's moccasins. Not just in this building. Here, there, outside the State even. To me the thing that blows the mind is to see a teacher who never goes outside the classroom, doesn't have a comprehensive picture of education because she doesn't read or attempt to study... *[Program Manager, 6-77]*
- ...I could give you a list of forty teachers in this Project who could go anywhere and train a staff and get them going. We have a few staff members who are moving into positions of principals, superintendents... I think it is all directly related to Project experience.... I think in the next few years the District will develop a comprehensive staff development program which will affect a large number of teachers and they will use our teachers to do this. Years from now we will be seeing tremendous things happening as our people move into responsibility in the District and State and implement these ideas... *[Staff Development Coordinator, 6-77]*
- ...It is my desire, in the future (after Project) to strive to create a psychological climate, as in the past five years, so the children can be free to make mistakes, free to be curious, feel free to learn from their environment, from students, from experience, and from me... *[Teacher, 5-77]*
- ...I am as excited as I know Maslow must have been at one time, when he first started getting it together.... I'm past the missionary stage, the want-to-save-the-world part. More sophisticated than that. But I know through subtle influence and my own staff development that I can have some type of impact, large or small.... I've been in nearly every state of the Union in the last two years and the people I team with here have done a lot too. We are psyched up, and our crap detectors are fine tuned.... I'm excited because the best of what the Project stood for and could be is very much alive. We are not limited by our mistakes. We can learn from them. I know what not to do. The discrimination process is continuing. I don't care where it is I'm going or what I will do, but I assure you that wherever it is I go I will take the Project with me. All I have learned... *[Project Manager, 6-77]*

Those who remained in the former PSP schools and those who moved out "took the Project with them" in some way. What happened next we will not know, short of follow-on investigation. Neither integration nor innovation, viewed as process, have a stopping point: either they evolve or they regress. As people moved into and out of the former PSP schools and the schools themselves melded more into the District, further adaptations would take place. To the extent that a process of continuing renewal pervades the schools and its vitality is maintained, we would expect the spirit and associated practices of PSP to be pervasive and to spread in some measure. Innovation would be expected to spread, too, through staff who moved out of those schools into other positions in the District, State, and nation "taking the Project with them". Many had developed a strong capacity not just to implement new practices, but to understand how they fit together in systemic change, to reflect on action, to learn from experience, and to infuse those understandings into further action.

If we are to share the search for "A Better Way in Education" we can do no less.

# POSTSCRIPT

## QUO VADIS? -- THREE IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-ON STUDIES

This document has been longer than either the writer or the sponsors (NIE, Regional Programs) had in mind when it was commissioned. Even so, it is selective in its treatment of PSP experience. For each of the specific topics discussed in this report there is more to be mined from that experience. Keeping our focus on the totality rather than the components of implementation, however, there are some lines of inquiry which would build upon the present study in ways relevant to NIE agendas for the improvement of practice.

Three follow-on studies are suggested here--none of them highly elaborate; each of them a potentially cost-effective use of resources. Two derive directly from presently available documentation, while the third calls for new data collection. The first would be a comparative education analysis across PSP schools to highlight the importance of site-specific variables in implementing changes in practice. The second would focus primarily upon internal evaluation as a vehicle for improving practice (with some lesser attention to the role of external evaluation and monitoring). The third proposed study would collect and analyze data on the retention of innovation in the target schools and the diffusion and dissemination of innovation beyond them.

### (1) Comparative Analysis of Schools Implementing Change

The present study has depicted the implementation in the set of eight schools, noting differences among schools largely by level of schooling (elementary, middle, high). It has been suggested at several points in the discussion that elementary schools were more similar than different in the levels of change implemented in educational practice. While the broad generalization holds, it glosses over differences among schools as settings for change. Given that PSP schools were, by and large, implementing the same set of new concepts and practices, the schools themselves may be considered the variables.* Each school had its own characteristics and personality--deriving from the characteristics and personality of the people (students and staff) who lived and worked there, and from its history and setting.

We have suggested in the present chapter the kinds of accommodations that occur during implementation of innovation. Both the idealized components of planned change and the people expected to implement them accommodated in some measure to each other. Such mutual adaptation accords with contemporary research findings. More importantly, it affirms that schools are created for people rather than people for schools. A comparative education study across the schools would analyze available data (from surveys, tests, observations, interviews) to deduce what can be learned from PSP experience about school characteristics and settings in relation to the implementation of innovation. Such study could suggest elements of context that should be taken into account in devising strategies to assure the utilization of knowledge for the improvement of practice (including attention to general and individualized approaches to dissemination).

(2) Evaluation and the Improvement of Practice

A second study, for which there exist documentation and data as yet only partially reported out, would examine internal evaluation in PSP. The intent would be to identify what can be learned from PSP experience about evaluation as a mechanism for the improvement of educational practice.

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*This is not the case in many other projects. For example, within the Experimental Schools Program, all projects were concerned with comprehensive, systemic change; but many sought to allow schools to develop individually different programs and approaches to change, to test the viability of alternative schools within a single schooling system. Other programs where the innovation studied might be the same across schools, tend not to document the wide range of variables that condition implementation--the innovation and related study being partial in scope and often short-run in duration.

PSP's organization included an evaluation unit--referred to as Level I or Internal Evaluation, to distinguish it from Level II or External Evaluation. The unit's personnel were moved to District level in PSP Year 5 to become the nucleus of a broadened approach to evaluation services in the County generally. Level I evaluation was intended to serve the Project by providing information to decision-makers to help them monitor performance and take whatever action seemed appropriate to improve progress towards objectives. The evaluators saw themselves as performing pro-active studies and responsive studies. The pro-active studies were designed to assess progress towards specified measurable objectives (e.g., analysis of test and survey data), and responsive studies, generated to meet evaluation needs as perceived by practitioners.

The external evaluation design included a component to study Internal Evaluation. Level II completed a major task in retrieving, organizing, cataloguing and summarizing over a hundred documents produced by Level I during the five years of the Project, and completed an evaluation of the technical adequacy of the major "products".* The proposed study would furnish a summary update on Level I products; report on the process and effects of Internal Evaluation using available data from surveys, interviews and PSP documents; and comment upon the issues that surface from PSP experience. Several of these issues are generic in evaluation and important to address in devising strategies for improving practice. They include:

- Basic Documentation: On the one hand evaluation often generates large quantities of information, costly to assemble and sometimes hard to manage, analyze and interpret. On the other hand, dissemination strategies are crippled when basic records have not been kept systematically to record what is being done and at what cost in time and money.
- Data Problems: Problems that occur in routine data collection, assembly, processing and retrieval are frequently glossed over in evaluation studies. Recognizing the pitfalls and the vagaries in quality, timeliness, and utilization of data is important to interpreting "results".
- "Success" and "Outcomes": The issue of defining "success" and "outcomes" in innovative programs. The role of test data. Standardized measures vs. indicators of quality education. Choosing what you look at and audiences/utilizers for what you find.
- "Controls": Issues of comparability and the pollution of controls (negative) by the diffusion of innovation (positive).

These issues are common to internal and external evaluation. While the prime focus would be Internal Evaluation in PSP, the study would also touch on pitfalls and opportunities in Level II evaluation and Federal monitoring of projects.* The rationale for the study is that documentation and evaluation are necessary if we are to learn from experience and plan and act accordingly. They are essential to any strategy of dissemination when dissemination is conceived as implementation of improved educational practice.

### (3) Retention and Diffusion of Innovation

The heavy investment of Federal monies and of local time and energies to change the Piedmont schools was intended to be seminal: the transformation in environment and practices in the pilot schools was expected to generate knowledge and know-how that would facilitate the spread and utilization of concepts and practices without replicating the initial cost. The Transference Program was one planned strategy to this end. However, there has been no effort to render the major Federal investment more cost-effective by finding out to what extent dissemination and diffusion has occurred and what can be learned from the experience of three years post-PSP activity to increase our understanding of implementation and dissemination.

The first two studies suggest ways of learning from analysis of existing data. The third suggested study would require a follow-through effort in new data collection and analysis, to address questions of retention and diffusion of innovation: What has happened in the pilot schools since the Project ended? Three years later, do these schools retain and build upon the comprehensive innovation in the instructional environmetn? Have the knowledge, the skills, the improvements in practice been diffused and disseminated beyond the pilot area? What factors have influenced retention, diffusion, and utilization of new practices? What can be learned from the post-PSP experience about ways in which knowledge and practices are spread and utilized beyond a pilot area?

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*One area in which more could be done to learn from experience concerns the role and functions of Federal project monitors. They have an overview and comparative perspective from monitoring a range of projects which is invaluable. Yet it is not apparent in many cases that their skills and knowledge are tapped within the Federal agency or in its relations with contractors and clients. "Creative monitoring" as opposed to "contract management" can contribute greatly to the improvement of practice.

These questions could be addressed at various levels of intenstiy and extensiveness, with varying levels of cost. A relatively small study could be highly cost-effective in terms of illuminating elements that should be structured into strategies for dissemination.*

The component on retention of improved practices would require some basic field study and interviewing in the pilot schools and District, to judge levels of retention and development of PSP-style innovation and the factors influencing them. The component on diffusion/dissemination would use interviewing and questionnaire approaches to identify the formal and ifnormal channels by which PSP innovation is perceived to have affected practice outside the target area, notably: (a) Within the District--in the ten schools grouped with PSP into a larger administrative area when the Project ended; and in the District generally, particularly by systematic staff development or a Transference-type program. (b) Outside the District, by formal and informal mechanisms. In particular, the notion of diffusion of innovation by the mobility of innovators is worth pursuing. It could be approached by tracking key PSP personnel who moved out of Project schools. (How did PSP experience influence what they are now doing and how does it affect their new colleagues/work? Did they indeed "take the Project with them"?)

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*If the kind of understandings generated by a PSP-related case study proved illuminating, they could provide a basis for designing a larger-scale investigation across selected Federal projects to furnish generalizable inputs to dissemination strategies.

## Learning from Experience
## Completing the Knowledge-Planning-Action Loop

The above suggestions are made in the belief that gains accrue in knowledge and in improved practice when we hone our ability to learn from experience. Capitalizing on existing documentation, data, and experience generated by past investment may be less glamorous but more cost-effective in this respect than launching high-cost ventures into "new" areas for research and development.

The theme of learning from experience is applicable at all levels of the educational enterprise--from individual student to Federal agency. For example, there are strong parallels between what we understand of the stages of student learning, and the stages of staff development, and the levels of dissemination identified by Regional Programs.* Similarly, what we understand about individualizing instruction in a schoolroom, has parallels in well-constructed staff development programs, and in well-designed dissemination strategies. All require, minimally, attention to identifying the needs of learners/clients, appropriate utilization of the four learning modes, and attention to components of the learning cycle.**

Finally, we note a parallel between PSP experience in designing and implementing change strategies and Federal/RP efforts to do the same. When PSP planners set about creating a new and better instructional environment responsive to community goals for education, they studied the best of available knowledge and the best of "tested practices", selecting elements that seemed appropriate to goals and mutually compatible. They built their plan upon this knowledge and then proceeded to act to implement THE innovation. We judged that what they implemented was more than the sum of the parts derived from prior knowledge: it was a new Gestalt. We would argue that the systematic effort to reflect upon action, to learn from experience, is the link between what an NIE/Regional Programs planning document refers to as "utilizing existing knowledge" and "the creation of new knowledge".

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*Regional Programs have identified four ways to think of dissemination (spread, exchange, choice, implementation) that are paralleled by the major stages in staff development (awareness, exploration, practice, feedback and reinforcement--see Ch. 4), and the stages in individual mastery of new skills.

**See Chapter 3.

The loop joining knowledge and practice is completed, the cycle of renewal continues--whether in PSP schools or in NIE programs--so long as we seek deliberately to learn from experience. For in learning from experience, we can both help to generate knowledge and to improve practice.

# APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Statistical Profile of Target Area Students, 1968-1970

Appendix 2 - Original and Revised Goals and Objectives of PSP, 1972 and 1975

Appendix 3 - Table and Schematics for Studies of the New Instructional Environment (SRC/EPRC, 1975)

Appendix 4 - Implementation of Multi-aged Learning Communities at Elementary School A and Elementary School E, 1971-1977

APPENDIX 1

## STATISTICAL PROFILE OF TARGET AREA STUDENTS
## BEFORE THE PROJECT--1968,1969,1970 DATA

Enrollments by Race. Dropouts. Further Education

### Enrollments by Race 1971-72

| School | Total Enrollment | Black | White | Percent Black |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A [redacted] | 321 | 52 | 269 | 16.10% |
| B [redacted] | 174 | 30 | 144 | 17.24% |
| D [redacted] | 305 | 57 | 248 | 18.69% |
| E [redacted] | 446 | 82 | 364 | 18.39% |
| C [redacted] | 377 | 62 | 315 | 16.45% |
| F [redacted] | 497 | 122 | 375 | 24.55% |
| G [redacted] | 1,300 | 246 | 1,054 | 18.92% |
| H [redacted] | 1,357 | 223 | 1,134 | 16.43% |
| Total | 4,777 | 874 | 3,903 | Av= 18.30% |

Average Daily Attendance --District 91.71% Greer 92.75%

### Percentage of loss from 1st grade through 12th grade

| | District | Target Population |
|---|---|---|
| 1968 | 41.4% | 39.8% |
| 1969 | 40.4% | 43.6% |
| 1970 | 41.5% | 54.8% |

### Percentage of graduates entering college

| | District | Target Population |
|---|---|---|
| 1968 | 40% | 40% |
| 1969 | 42% | 38% |
| 1970 | 42% | 35% |

### Percentage of graduates entering trade and technical schools

| | District | Target Population |
|---|---|---|
| 1968 | 11.2% | 15% |
| 1969 | 13.9% | 16% |
| 1970 | 13.0% | 20% |

## APPENDIX 2

# ORIGINAL AND CORRESPONDING REFORMULATED GOALS OF THE PIEDMONT SCHOOLS PROJECT

| **Original Objective** (1972) | **Restated Objectives** (1975) |
|---|---|
| (1) To involve actively students, parents, community groups, and professional educators through educational cooperatives in a continuing process of deciding the purposes of education in an evolving society, in suggesting concrete ways to achieve those purposes, in recommending policy governing education to the Board of Trustees, and in providing feedback and grass roots evaluation relating to local education. | Process Objective 1: To improve the quantity and quality of involvement of the lay community in the decision making process.<br>Process Objective 2: To improve the quantity and quality of involvement of the professional community in the decision making process.<br>Process Objective 3: To improve the quantity and quality of involvement of the school community in the decision making process.<br>Product Objective 8: By May of 1977, to increase to 50 per cent the percentage of the lay community who perceive the discipline in Piedmont Schools Project schools as having improved during the life of the project as compared with 31 percent in 1974. |
| (2) To provide experiences for students and teachers designed to promote positive attitudes toward self, learning, and positive relationships with others. | Process Objective 5: To provide a variety of processes for individualizing education.<br>Process Objective 6: To provide various programs and materials in each curriculum area for individualizing education.<br>Product Objective 3: To decrease by 5 per cent annually the 1974 baseline percentage of students whose self-concept scores are in the lowest three categories, while maintaining the percentage scoring in the highest three categories.<br>Product Objective 4: To increase by 5 per cent annually the percentage of Piedmont Schools Project students reflecting a positive attitude toward selected programs, operating procedures, and personnel within Piedmont Schools Project so that by 1977 the percentage will be 15 per cent above the 1974 baseline per cent.<br>Product Objective 5: During the school years 1974-75, 1975-76, and 1976-77, to increase the percentage of attendance of Piedmont Schools Project students a statistically significant degree above the median percentage of attendance of their respective three preceding years.<br>Product Objective 6: To decrease annually to a statistically significant degree the dropout rate of the Piedmont Schools Project student population.<br>Product Objective 7: To decrease annually to a statistically significant degree the mean per capita disciplinary suspensions within Piedmont Schools Project schools. |

PSP Objectives, contd.

| | |
|---|---|
| (3) To develop curriculum specifications in the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor areas in terms of pupil performance objectives necessary to achieve a basic education. | Process Objective 6: To provide various programs and materials in each curriculum area for individualizing education.<br>Product Objective 1: By May of 1977, to increase the annual mean learning rate of Piedmont Schools Project students in the basic skills areas 20 per cent above their mean baseline rates of learning established in May of 1974.<br>Product Objective 2: By May of 1977, to decrease by 5 per cent the percentage of Piedmont Schools Project students scoring in the two lowest categories of achievement, while maintaining the percentage scoring in the two upper categories. |
| (4) To provide the means for each student who has mastered the basic skills to design his own educational program according to his needs and value structure. | Process Objective 3: To improve the quantity and quality of involvement of the school community in the decision making process.<br>Process Objective 5: To provide a variety of processes for individualizing education.<br>Process Objective 6: To provide various programs and materials in each curriculum area for individualizing education. |
| (5) To develop real-world evaluation and verification capabilities to assess student performance of the basic skills and to assess the effectiveness of education programs. | Process Objective 7: To provide product and process feedback information to the decision makers. |
| (6) To develop career and occupational information programs and to promote practical work experiences for students so as to dignify the world of work. | Process Objective 5: To provide a variety of processes for individualizing education.<br>Process Objective 6: To provide various programs and materials in each curriculum area for individualizing education. |
| (7) To provide art, drama, music, and physical education programs geared to individual expression, fulfillment, and appreciation. | Process Objective 6: To provide various programs and materials in each curriculum area for individualizing education. |
| (8) To develop, implement, test, and refine an organizational model, K-12 that will facilitate and encourage individualized and personalized education programs. | Process Objective 4: To provide the time and opportunity for instructional personnel to function in a capacity which will facilitate individualized education. |
| (9) To develop a system to provide for detailed fiscal accountability. | Process Objective 7: To provide process and product feedback information to the decision makers. |
| (10) To develop staffing patterns and the necessary inservice training program so that all involved serve as facilitators of the educational process and promote positive relationships with others. | Process Objective 4: To provide the time and opportunity for instructional personnel to function in a capacity which will facilitate individualized education. |

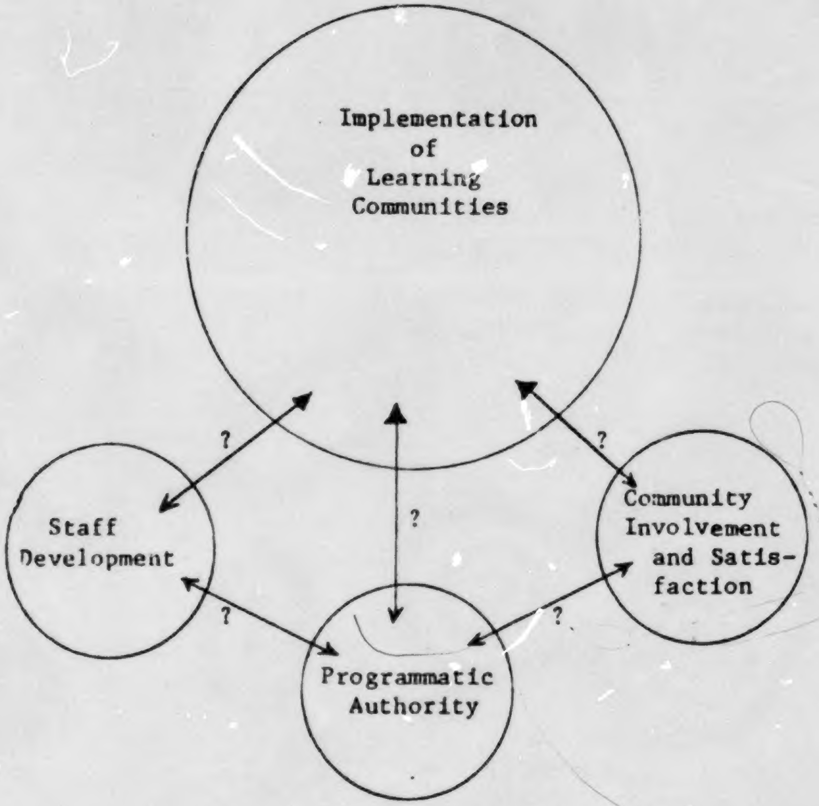
Figure I.1

The Process of Implementing the New Instructional Environment
Focus and Assessments of Components of Substudy #1

| Components of Substudy #1 | Level II Focus | Assessments Emphasized (cf.NIE/RFP) |
|---|---|---|
| 1A. Implementation of the Learning Community Concept | Degree to which the structure and climate of the learning community is developed and implemented | - *Process* of implementation of LCs<br>- *Degree* of implementation of LCs<br>- *Reactions* of participants |
| 1B. Staff Development | Explaining the process and the impact of staff development activities initiated by PSP to promote implementation of the new instructional environment | - *Process* of staff development<br>- Attitudinal *impact* |
| 1C. Assignment of Programmatic Authority | Extent to which authority for programmatic decision-making has been delegated to individuals directly responsible for the implementation of instructional programs | - *Process* of redistribution of authority<br>- *Degree* of implementation in decision-making groups<br>- *Reactions* of groups |
| 1D. Community Input/ Involvement | Improvement in quantity and quality of community involvement in the educational decision-making process | - *Extent* of formal and informal community input to decisions<br>- *Process* of channeling inputs<br>- *Effects*/impact |
| 1E. Parent and Community Satisfaction | Parent satisfaction with implementation of learning communities. Parent and community satisfaction with access to decision-making and effect of inputs. | - *Extent* of knowledge of and satisfaction with new instructional system (parents)<br>- *Extent* of knowledge of and satisfaction with inputs into implementation process (parents and community) |

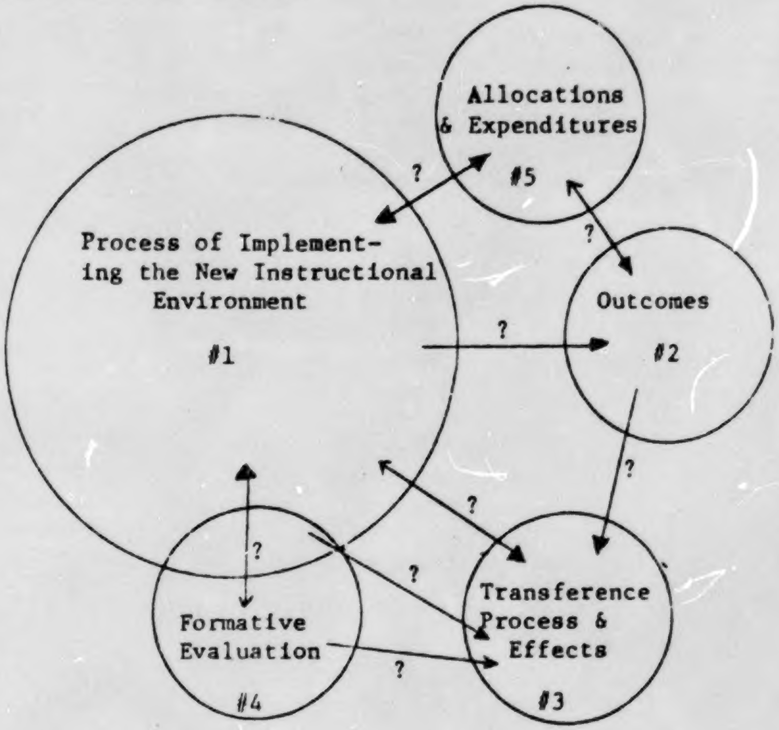
FIGURE I-2

SCHEMATICS FOR INTEGRATION OF ANALYTIC COMPONENTS


Implementation of Learning Communities
Staff Development
Community Involvement and Satisfaction
Programmatic Authority
?
?
?
?
?
?

SCHEMATIC A

Hypothetical Relationships between Components of Sub-Study #1: The Process of Implementation of the New Instructional Environment


Allocations & Expenditures
#5
Process of Implementing the New Instructional Environment
#1
Outcomes
#2
Transference Process & Effects
#3
Formative Evaluation
#4
?
?
?
?
?
?
?
?

SCHEMATIC B

Hypothetical Relationships of Substudies: Towards an Integrative Evaluation of The Piedmont Schools Project

EPRC/Webster/9-75

APPENDIX 4

## IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI-AGED LEARNING COMMUNITIES AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL A AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL E
## 1971-1977

| YEAR | SCHOOL A | SCHOOL E |
|---|---|---|
| PSP-Minus 2 | Principal & PTA Board discussed faculty plan to have 6 open space double classrooms, one multi-aged | Self-contained, single grade rooms |
| PSP-Minus 1 | Six open space, double classes one of them multi-aged across three ages and with hand-picked, consenting teacher team | Self-contained, single grade classes |
| PSP-Year 1 | More multi-grade LCs | Open classrooms created. Students assigned by grade level. "Investigation" of multi-aging |
| PSP-Year 2 | More multi-grade LCs | Students assigned by grade level.<br>Activities to develop plan for multi-aging |
| PSP-Year 3 | All LCs multi-aged with two-age span | Multi-aging implemented for first time in all LCs simultaneously |
| PSP-Year 4 | Same | Experimentation with two-age-span and three-age span LCs. [Y/4 --new prog. manager] |
| PSP-Year 5 | Same | Same (?) |
| Reactions: | Will continue the same way after the project | Mixed feelings about multi-aging.<br>Not clear whether commitment will sustain the innovation. |

SRC/MW/4-78